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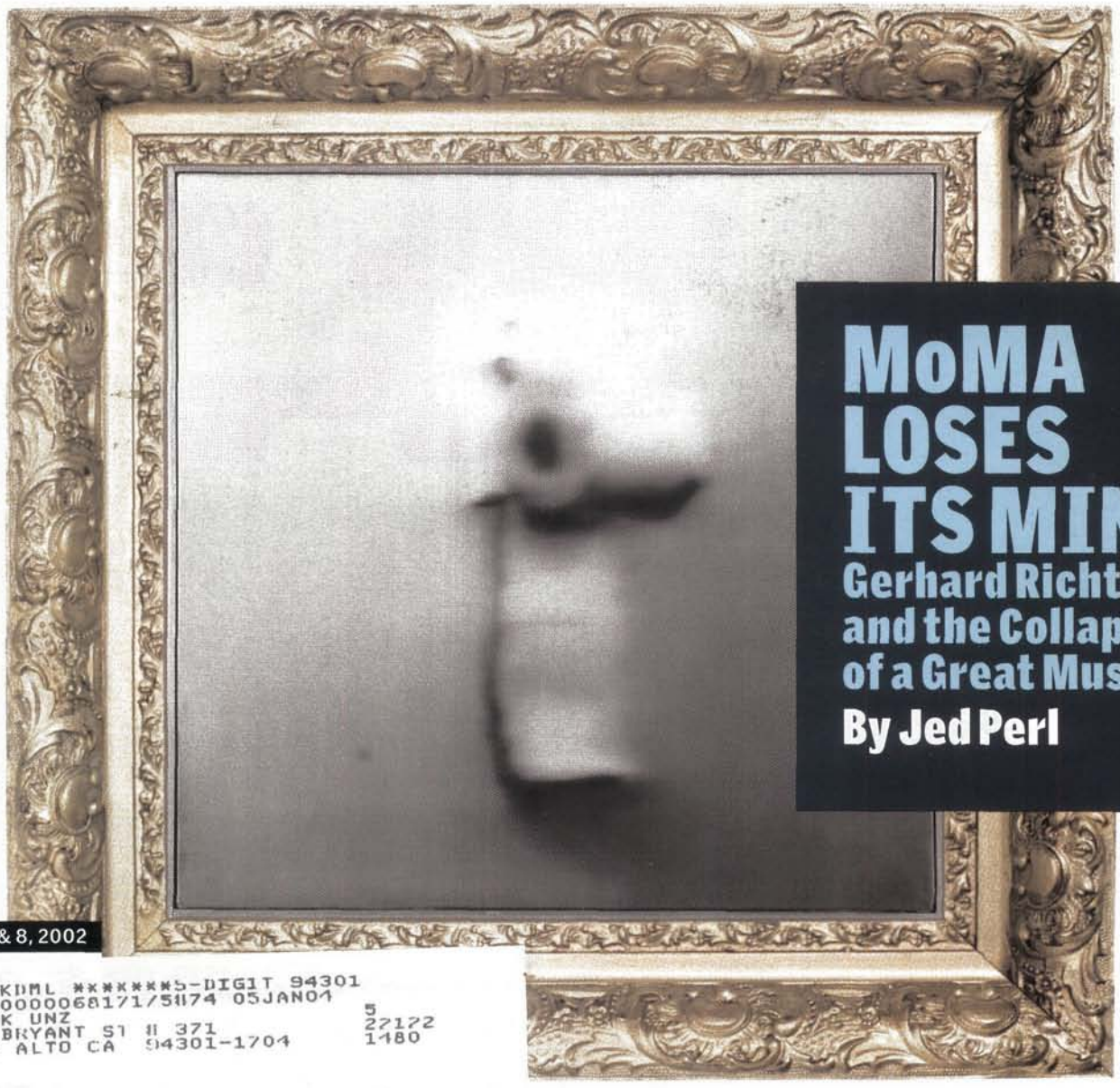

MoMA LOSES ITS MIND

Gerhard Richter and the Collapse of a Great Museum

By Jed Perl

APRIL 1 & 8, 2002

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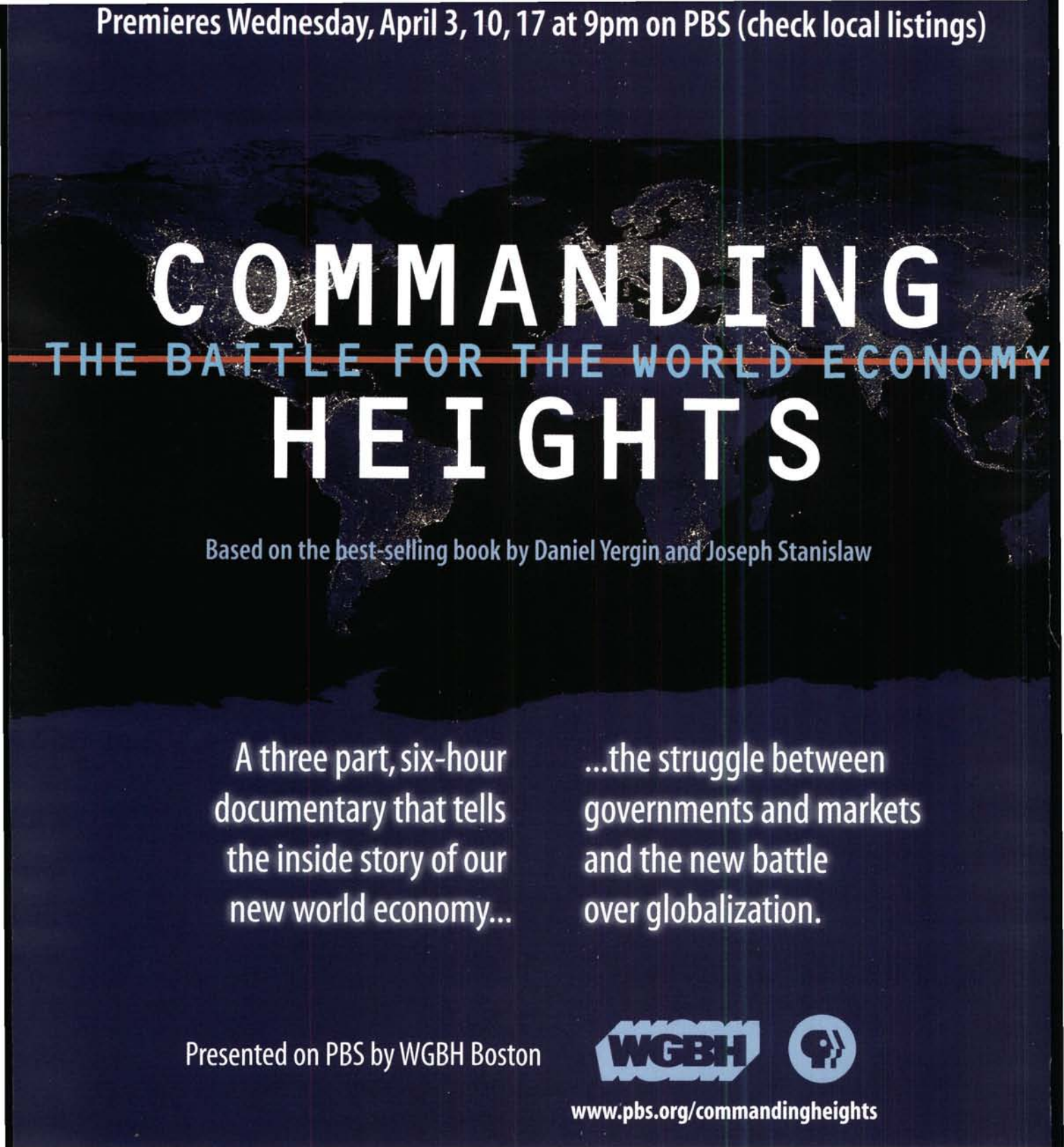

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CORRESPONDENCE

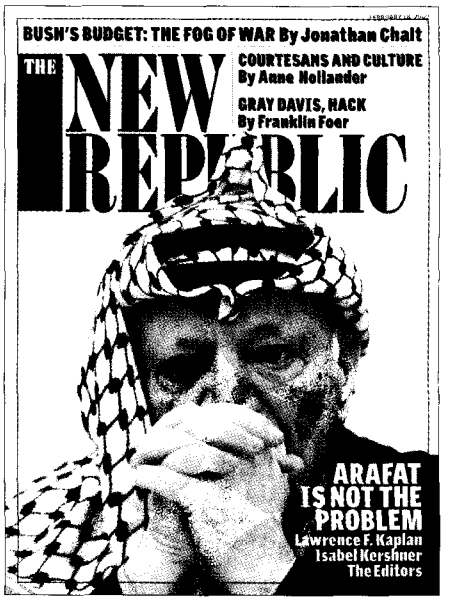
Gray matter

TO THE EDITORS:

Franklin Foer's mean-spirited rant against California Governor Gray Davis is long on histrionics and embarrassingly short on substance ("Foreign Aide," February 18). It is a selective sketch that ignores inconvenient facts. Foer asserts, for instance, that Davis has a "penchant" for micromanagement that had slowed his appointment of judges. Had Foer checked, he would have found that by the end of his third year in office, Davis had appointed 178 judges, compared with 170 appointments in the same span for former Governor Pete Wilson (whom no one ever accused of micromanagement). And Davis's judicial appointments have been universally praised for their quality.

As to education, Foer deliberately miscasts Davis's agenda as nonexistent. In fact, Davis has installed a strict structure of accountability to oversee the 34 percent increase in education funding that the governor gained in three years. Test scores are up three years in a row; 15,000 new teachers have been recruited; and 100,000 teachers have received world-class training in reading, math, and science. Education funding in California went from $5,756 per pupil when Davis took office to more than $6,922 in the current budget year. In fact, Davis's education plan for California is more rigorous than that proposed by President George W. Bush for the nation as a whole. Does Foer mention any of this? No. He isolates a single Davis proposal—a state income-tax exemption for teachers—and acts as if it were the totality of the governor's education program, calling it the "crown jewel" of Davis's education reforms.

Finally, on energy, Foer appears oblivious to what really happened in California. Sure, Davis refused to permit rate increases for retail electricity customers. But that was smart, not dilatory. Market manipulation—led by Enron—pushed California's wholesale power prices up ten times normal levels in 2000. Is Foer saying that Davis should have passed a 400 percent rate increase on to ratepayers? Such increases would likely have bankrupted nearly every power user in California. Instead, Davis went directly at the problem. He blew the whistle on the power brokers; pressured the Federal Energy Regulatory Committee into doing its job to police a corrupted energy market; negotiated long-term contracts that broke the back of the expensive spot-power market; encouraged conservation; and brought more new generation on line than his predecessors had licensed in the previous twelve years.



Foer would mock Davis as a careful, deliberate, detail-oriented manager. But, with Enron before us as the poster child of managerial neglect, one might ask what is wrong with a manager (or a governor) who pays attention to detail?

STEVEN MAVIGLIO
Press Secretary to Governor Gray Davis
Sacramento, California

FRANKLIN FOER REPLIES:

First, Steven Maviglio dredges up Pete Wilson's record on judicial appointees. But this isn't relevant. Wilson didn't have nearly as many vacancies to fill. (Democratic judges didn't want to retire under a Republican governor's watch.) According to the Judicial Council, an organization that monitors these things, Wilson averaged about 30 vacancies. Under Davis, the number has hovered between 60 and 85. Then, Maviglio turns to education. He takes me to task for using the term "crown jewel" to describe Davis's state income tax exemption for teachers. But I was merely repeating Davis's own phrase. (And it's curious that Maviglio doesn't defend the idea.) While Davis has some genuine accomplishments on this issue, my point was that he invests his time and political capital on vapid, poll-tested proposals. Finally, Maviglio brings up energy. But his boss's actions undermine his argument. Davis has petitioned the federal government to overturn the deals he himself cut with the electric companies. You can understand why Davis would want the change: Under his initial arrangement, the state will be charged billions for overpriced energy it won't ever use. When Davis cut the deal, he paid about $69 per megawatt hour. A few months later it could be bought for about $19. ■

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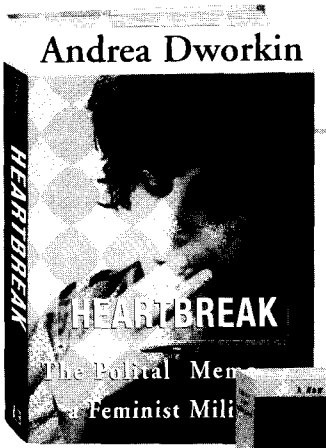

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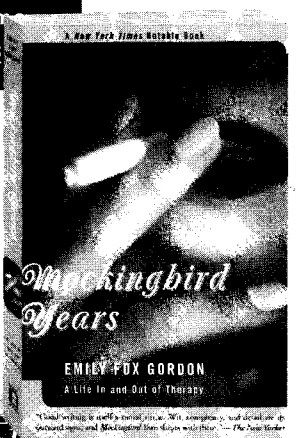

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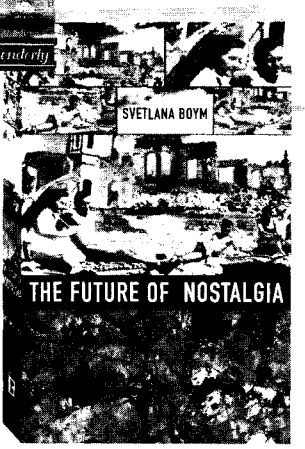

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Beloved Country

IN THE WEST, the post-cold-war era began on November 9, 1989—when the Berlin Wall fell—and ended on September 11. In Africa, it began several months later, when South Africa released Nelson Mandela from prison. And it ended last week, when Robert Mugabe crushed the struggle for freedom in Zimbabwe—and African governments cheered.

In both places, the era's defining assumption was that democracy was universal. Some countries might be further down the path than others, but none rejected democracy as its ultimate aspiration. In Eastern Europe, communism collapsed as an ideological alternative almost overnight. And in Africa, apartheid's end coincided with a parallel collapse—as "anti-imperialist" dictators from Benin to Zambia gave way to free-market democrats.

In the West, the era of democratic consensus ended with the realization that Al Qaeda's war against liberalism commanded mass support throughout the Muslim world. In Africa, it ended with the decision by the continent's leaders to bless Mugabe's stolen election. That decision demolishes the pretense that Africa's governments—even those elected democratically themselves—view liberal democracy as the continent's ultimate aspiration. It doesn't change the West's obligations to Africa's suffering people. But it ends whatever claim Africa's leaders had on the conscience of the world.

The story of Zimbabwe's betrayal begins in March 2000, when a ragtag coalition of labor unions, businesspeople, and human rights activists known as the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) came from nowhere to claim one-third of the seats in Zimbabwe's parliamentary elections. Suddenly facing his most serious challenge in decades, Zimbabwe's septuagenarian tyrant Robert Mugabe responded with a two-pronged strategy. He would terrorize Zimbabwe's tiny white minority—in an effort to exploit black resentment of white wealth. And he would terrorize the mostly black opposition—in an effort to cow his critics into submission. During the past two years more than 1,000 white farms have been invaded, and over 100 opposition activists have been murdered. Torture camps have opened next door to police stations; GDP has plunged an estimated 30 percent; and the World Health Organization says that Zimbabwe—once a grain exporter—faces mass starvation.

But Mugabe's effort failed. In surveys this spring, most Zimbabweans said that repression and economic collapse—not white land ownership—were the country's biggest problems. And as the election for president drew near, the opposition continued to gain strength. Preelection polls showed Mugabe losing badly to MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai.

On Election Day, Mugabe went for broke. To counter the MDC's support in the cities, the government set up 30 percent fewer polling stations in urban areas than it had in 2000—leaving city dwellers to stand in line for up to 15 hours. The courts extended voting an extra day, but the government delayed opening the polls for five hours because officials needed "to test the equipment." In the capital city of Harare alone, estimated the *Zimbabwe Independent* newspaper, 350,000 people—close to Mugabe's supposed margin of victory—tried to vote and could not.

In rural areas—where Mugabe's support was strongest—the government not only set up five times as many polling stations per voter; government trucks actually ferried people to the polls. When MDC and civil-society observers tried to monitor rural voting, 1,400 of them were arrested in what Amnesty International called "a pattern of mass arbitrary detention." The local observers who did manage to observe rural voting noted huge discrepancies between the number of ballots they saw cast and the number of votes the government recorded for itself. The head of the Zimbabwe Election Support Network, an alliance of independent civic groups, said, "There is no way these elections could be described as substantially free and fair."

Western governments agreed. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said the election "was won by intimidation and not by votes." British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said Mugabe had "one goal, power at all costs." Canada reduced aid to Zimbabwe, and Germany eliminated it altogether.

But Western efforts to isolate Mugabe were stymied by African governments—which praised the vote as democracy at its best. Namibia called the election "water tight, without room for rigging." Nigeria called it "peaceful and orderly." Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi wrote to Mugabe that his victory was "testimony of the confidence and high esteem the people of Zimbabwe hold in you." Zambia's Levy Mwanawasa praised the vote's "high turnout and peaceful manner." Tanzania's Ben Mkapa said Mugabe's "firmness was good for all of Africa." And the Organization of African Unity called the vote "transparent, credible, free and fair."

And with those statements, African governments did exactly what Mugabe hoped they would do. For the months preceding the election, Mugabe had fought to deny Western observers entrance to his country—claiming that only African teams would fairly judge an African election. But what Mugabe really suspected was that African governments would *not* fairly judge an African election. And he was right. Since the end of the cold war, Africa's leaders have grown adept at pledging their support for democracy when they think it will win them Western aid. In recent months South Africa's Thabo Mbeki has promoted an ambitious plan in which African governments dedicate themselves to democracy in return for $64 billion in foreign assistance. But in claiming that "the will of the people of Zimbabwe has prevailed" in last week's election, Mbeki mocked that proposed compact. In fact, he showed that the only compact that really matters is the one African leaders have been making with one another since independence: We won't criticize your tyranny if you don't criticize ours.

In the days since Zimbabwe's vote, Mugabe has set about crushing his opponents once and for all. The MDC's secretary-general has been arrested. Government troops have surrounded the MDC's offices in Zimbabwe's second-largest city, Bulawayo, and at least one MDC activist has been beaten to death. The government has passed a law banning all foreign journalists. And Mugabe's aides have hinted that they may expand their campaign against Zimbabwe's whites to include the country's Asians as well.

And for this the people of Zimbabwe have not only their own leader to blame, but the leaders of much of the African continent. In *The Washington Post*, a Zimbabwean political science professor named John Makumbe described his country's election as a test of "whether Africa is willing and able to police itself and is able to show the world that it is able to take that step forward to democracy and stability, rather than remain mired in the muck of autocracy and stagnation." Say a prayer for Professor Makumbe tonight. Because he has his answer.

PETER BEINART

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EDUCATION REFORM: MEASURING SUCCESS

Kurt M. Landgraf, President & CEO of Educational Testing Service

The passage of the No Child Left Behind Act was a watershed event in the national education reform movement. The President and Members of Congress pulled together to make this happen without regard to party affiliation, recognizing the public's demand that educating all our children is the nation's top priority. However, far-reaching reform will not come easily. We must now focus on three critical factors that will determine success: a substantial commitment of resources, sufficient time, and a great and sustained effort.

As we all know, circumstances have changed since this historic legislation was first introduced. We face a new reality in the post 9-11 world. Attention has been placed, and rightly so, on security both at home and around the globe. And the go-go economy of the past decade has slowed. Shrinking budgets are forcing tough decisions by elected officials at the state and local levels, and by everyday Americans sitting around their kitchen tables.

Yet the desire for meaningful education reform persists. An Opinion Dynamics survey conducted for ETS in mid-February found that Americans overwhelmingly back requiring states to annually test students to determine if standards are being met. A majority of those surveyed also support directing a larger share of federal education money to schools that do not perform well on such tests to help them improve.

While considerable federal funds have been made available for these new tests, significant resources will have to come from the state level as well. Even as most state legislatures struggle to split up a smaller pool of tax revenue, we must ensure that they invest in building quality assessments to support good teaching and learning.

It is now time for all of us — parents, students, teachers and policymakers — to follow through on our commitment to advancing quality and equity in education.

"We must provide the resources to help teachers teach and help students learn..."

The No Child Left Behind Act calls for high standards, strong accountability, and annual standards-based assessments. Federal mandates now require testing some 22 million students every year. This is an ambitious undertaking, and it has to be done right. But developing a fair, accurate test, even in just one subject for one grade, is a lengthy, multi-step process. The specter of unreliable data and costly mistakes assures us that we must invest the time and money it takes to get it right the first time.

The new testing regimen will provide important information that the American people and policymakers can use to accomplish significant, lasting reform. But testing alone is not enough; it's just one step in education reform. We must respond to test results — particularly poor results — intelligently, thoughtfully, and responsibly in order to help teachers and students improve classroom achievement. The challenge before us is to muster the political, moral and professional will to improve public education. We must provide the resources to help teachers teach and help students learn, and we must monitor progress via well-designed assessments. Only then will we be able to reach our goal: an education system marked by excellence in student performance, elimination of the achievement gap, and, yes, tangible evidence that no child is left behind.

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We invite you to continue this dialog by contacting us via e-mail at: issues@ets.org

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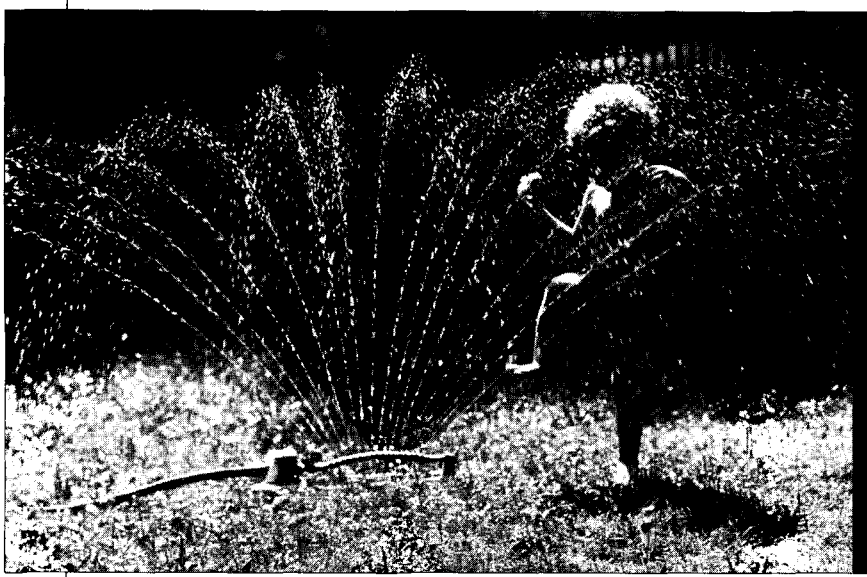

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Scandal Fatigue

FOR A MOMENT earlier this year, the Enron scandal altered Washington political culture. An avalanche of popular outrage—stoked by the media—made previously routine behavior suddenly suspect. Tough new reforms and harsh anti-white-collar-crime rhetoric were in; close association with the financial-services lobby and sunny pro-corporate bromides were out. "Suddenly," reported *The New York Times* in early February, "there may be a political price to pay for not acting, and the race to regulate is on."

Alas, in recent weeks that price has been falling. The great wave of reform that seemed sure to follow in Enron's wake has not collapsed in one dramatic flourish. Rather, it's been split into several currents, each of which is petering out in obscurity. If things continue at this rate, by the time "reforms" are signed into law, they will hardly be worth the paper they're printed on.

Consider first what ought to be the least controversial step: bolstering the staff of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), the agency charged with policing financial crimes. The SEC is chronically outmatched by its white-collar foes. Lawyers and accountants with expertise in financial law can earn far more in the private sector working to subvert those laws than they can enforcing them for the government. In fact, the SEC doesn't even pay its employees as much as other government agencies. House Democrats have proposed nearly doubling the SEC's budget to $876 million, with House Republicans not too far behind at $700 million. The administration, though, wants to essentially freeze the SEC budget at $467 million. Why so miserly? Presumably because much of the financial industry—which has been quite generous to George W. Bush—prefers an ineffective SEC.

More controversial are congressional proposals to protect employee pensions. No one suffered more from the scandal than those unwitting Enron employees who saw their life savings wiped out. Yet this was simply the extreme manifestation of a common phenomenon: Many workers have large chunks of their 401(k) accounts invested in their own company's stock, even though any sane financial adviser would recommend diversification. So why do they do it? Employers prefer to have their workers vested in company stock (for various reasons, it's cheaper and promotes worker loyalty); yet employees often don't understand the risks of putting all their eggs in one basket.

Business lobbyists, backed by conservatives in Congress, have mounted a fierce campaign to block any reform that might protect workers. John Boehner, chairman of the House Education and Workforce Committee and the business lobby's point man on pension reform, declared that in his district "generations of employees at Kroger [and] Procter & Gamble have done very well investing in company stock." Yes, and the vast majority of people who drive drunk make it home safely. That doesn't make it a good idea. So far, though, Boehner's argument seems to be carrying the day. His bill, which closely tracks President Bush's position and seems likely to pass the House, would merely loosen restraints on employees selling company stock—and even that minor reform was weakened at K Street's behest.

But the most important battle—and the one that has received the least attention—concerns the disclosure of stock options. As it stands now, when companies offer stock options to their executives, they get the best of both worlds: They can deduct the cost of those stock options from their taxes, but they don't have to report the costs on their financial statements. In other words, they can tell Wall Street one thing and the IRS another. As a result, the stockholding public doesn't get an accurate picture of companies' bottom lines. Yahoo, for instance, reported a $71 million profit in 2000; it was later revealed that a full accounting of its stock-option liabilities would have turned that figure into a $1.3 billion loss. Senators Carl Levin and John McCain want to prevent such duplicity by forcing companies either to account for the costs of their stock options or lose their tax deductions. But business lobbies have attacked this proposal too, and, given that this crucial debate is taking place largely outside the public eye, the fate of the Levin-McCain proposal appears tenuous.

Indeed, at this point it looks likely that Enron won't change much of anything at all. Congress will pass, and the president will sign, some cosmetic measures. Financial reform will return to a life of quiet desperation in the darkness of subcommittees and page A16 of *The Wall Street Journal*. In other words, back to business as usual. Until, that is, the next Enron scandal. ■

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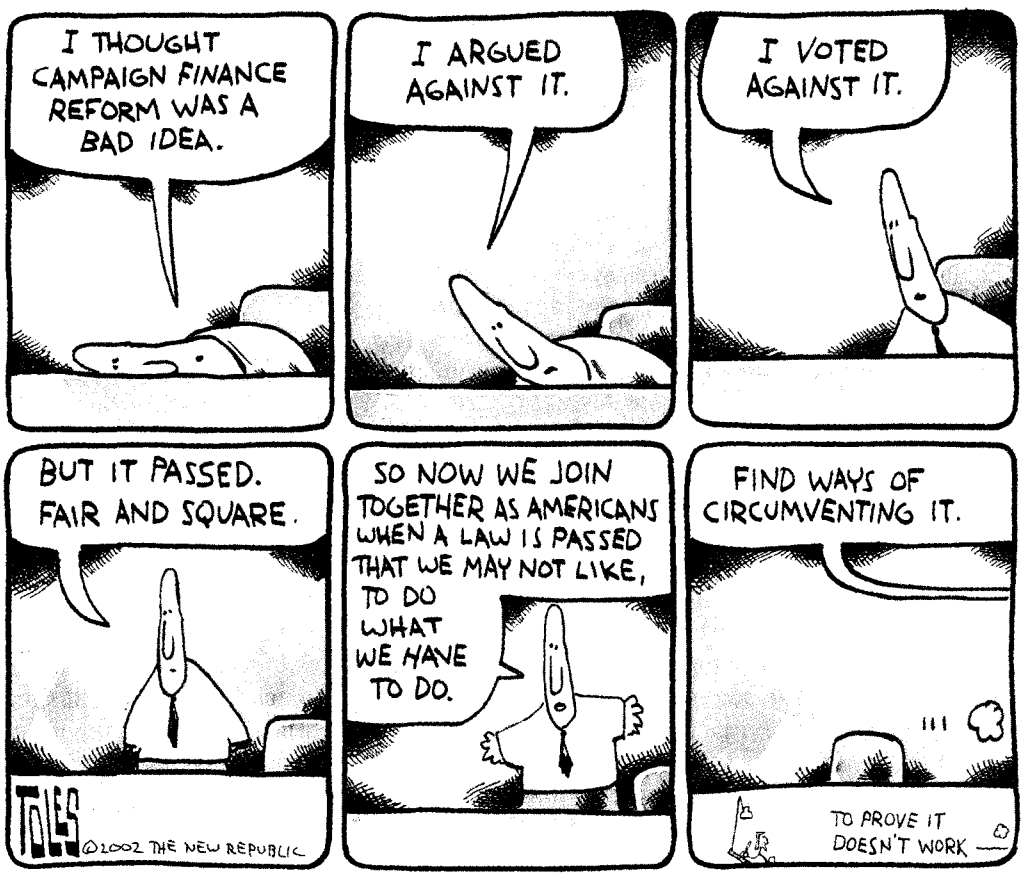
NOTEBOOK

SHOOTING ERROR: Although it happened almost a year and a half ago, who can forget twelve-year-old Muhammad al-Dura dying in his father's arms at Netzarim Crossing in the Gaza Strip, a victim of routine and intentional Israeli brutality. At least that's how French television depicted it in a video clip replayed countless times the world over. The image quickly attained iconic status, and Muhammad became the poster child for the second Palestinian intifada. (In its own narration of the clip, the Palestinian Authority spoke of the "beauty of the martyr," whose blood flows "like a waterfall.") But now a March 17 documentary aired by Germany's ARD television suggests something extraordinary: that Muhammad was killed not by Israeli soldiers, but by Palestinian gunmen, perhaps deliberately to create precisely such a photogenic martyr. The French footage, it turns out, was heavily edited—from six minutes to 50 seconds—and the French won't let anyone see the tape they didn't air. What's more, the Palestinian Authority didn't allow an autopsy on the boy and never released the bullet that killed him for outside scrutiny. ARD has done its own forensic investigation, however, and concluded that the shot that entered Muhammad's crouching body could not have come from the location where Israeli soldiers were positioned. ARD's report has been covered extensively in the German press (*Die Welt* headlined its article, "RICOCHETING TRUTH"). As of this writing, however, no major American newspaper or TV network—including the many that ran the original footage of Muhammad's death—has mentioned it.

RAY OF SUNSHINE: Far be it for us to defend Robert Ray, the man who succeeded Ken Starr as independent counsel and now hopes to replace Robert Torricelli as a U.S. senator from New Jersey. But there is something ridiculous about Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Patrick Leahy's recent call for a federal investigation into Ray's political activities. Leahy, who—like Torricelli—is a Democrat, alleges that Ray, a Republican, "may have engaged in improper political activity" while he served as independent counsel. The "improper activity" in question? That Ray lined up support and made preparations for his Senate bid as his independent counsel tenure was winding down. If Ray did this—and it's a good bet he did—then he exhibited bad judgment, and the voters of New Jersey will likely punish him for it at the polls. But for the Senate to demand an investigation into Ray at this moment is more than a tad hypocritical. That's because when it comes to investigating one of its own—namely Torricelli—the Senate has been AWOL. It's now been more than two months since federal prosecutors ended their investigation into Torricelli's financial dealings with, and official favors for, a wealthy contributor and handed the matter over to the Senate Ethics Committee. The committee's staff has reportedly reviewed the prosecutor's findings and presented a preliminary report to the committee—which now must decide whether to authorize an official investigation, including the retention of an outside counsel, into Torricelli. But so far it hasn't. And if it doesn't do so soon, it's doubtful New Jersey voters will have a full accounting of what Torricelli did before the fall election. Which, of course, is just what Senate Democrats want.

CASTING A PAAL: Douglas H. Paal continues to wait in the wings as the Bush administration's likely choice to be director of the American Institute in Taiwan—America's de facto ambassador to the island nation. But thanks to a recent article in THE NEW REPUBLIC that documented how Paal appears to have operated a nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization as a for-profit lobbying firm (see "Pacific Whim," by Joshua Micah Marshall, March 4 & 11), the likely appointment is raising some eyebrows. In a


I THOUGHT CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM WAS A BAD IDEA.
I ARGUED AGAINST IT.
I VOTED AGAINST IT.
BUT IT PASSED. FAIR AND SQUARE.
SO NOW WE JOIN TOGETHER AS AMERICANS WHEN A LAW IS PASSED THAT WE MAY NOT LIKE, TO DO WHAT WE HAVE TO DO.
FIND WAYS OF CIRCUMVENTING IT.
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TO PROVE IT DOESN'T WORK

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March 4 letter to Secretary of State Colin Powell, Republican Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina expressed his "deep concern" about Paal's potential posting. Helms went on to ask Powell whether the State Department had investigated the allegations made in TNR's article and, if so, what was its conclusion. "If the conclusion is that the allegations lack merit," Helms wrote, "please explain how." Helms shouldn't hold his breath waiting for a response. After delivering the keynote address at a recent U.S.-China Policy Foundation luncheon celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of the Shanghai Communiqué, Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly was asked to comment on the article and the allegations against Paal. According to one luncheon attendee, Kelly responded, "I have just returned from Asia and have not read the article." Fair enough. But Kelly continued, "In fact, I haven't read *The American Spectator*, *The National Enquirer*, or THE NEW REPUBLIC since I've been back. But I'm glad to see that hack journalism is alive and well." Hack political appointees, too, it would seem.

MAILING IT IN: The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has become a bloodbath, and all decent people—Israeli, Palestinian, American, whoever—ardently wish to see a cease-fire; but surely the truth must not become a victim of the desire to see the killing end. It was the truth that Kofi Annan mutilated in his startlingly virulent letter to Ariel Sharon on March 12. It is not true, for example, that in the retaliatory action that brought Israeli troops into Palestinian cities and refugee camps "hundreds of innocent noncombatant civilians—men, women, and children—have been injured or killed." Annan told Sharon that the Israeli response to the recent orgy of Palestinian terror "has come to resemble all-out conventional warfare." His point is only technically true: Israel made use of a variety of conventional military instruments. But would the Israeli response have been more proportionate, more acceptable, or more just had Israel dispatched suicide bombers of its own? There is a war being fought against the population of Israel, and the fact that it is an unconventional war, a war of deranged terror, does not make it any less of a war. Palestinian violence is no less political and no less ferocious than Israeli violence, and in its motive it is certainly dirtier. There is something grotesque about the United Nations lecturing Israel in the old way about what is best for it. Perhaps Annan's sharpness is owed to the death of a U.N. employee in an ambulance outside Tulkarem on March 7; but his tone runs the risk of vitiating the temperateness for which his pronouncements on this impossible problem were rightly appreciated. If the United Nations returns to its tradition of impatience (or worse) toward Israel, it will itself become yet another obstacle on the road to peace, or at least to quiet.

DEPARTMENT OF GLASS HOUSES: "It really is shocking that someone of your limited background in economics presumes to judge a great man like [James] Tobin or in eulogizing him to so pervert his opinions and work."—Ben Stein, upbraiding *New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman on the website of *The American Enterprise*, March 14. Krugman, a Princeton economist, is a winner of the American Economic Association's prestigious John Bates Clark Medal. Stein, who has an undergraduate economics degree, is a game show host.

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HOME NEWS: By the time most of you read this, TNR will have moved to new offices in scenic downtown Washington. Our new address is THE NEW REPUBLIC, 1331 H Street, NW, Suite 700, Washington, D.C. 20005. Our new phone number is (202) 508-4444. ■

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White House Watch

Set Menu

By Ryan Lizza

The front page of *USA Today* is a piece of journalistic real estate the White House cares about deeply. With more than 2.3 million readers each weekday, the paper has a reach well beyond the elite dailies of the Cambridge-Manhattan-Washington corridor. Which is why veteran *USA Today* reporter Larry McQuillan found himself on the phone with the White House for several hours last Thursday.

His front-page story that day was about the administration's penchant for secrecy, and he fingered President Bush's senior aide Karen Hughes as the White House's number-one control freak. To illustrate this, McQuillan pointed out a curious development: "White House officials who have been invited to the White House Correspondents' Association [WHCA] black-tie dinner in May say they are required to notify Hughes' office. If an official receives multiple invitations, which is common, she decides which one he or she can accept." As White House aides harangued McQuillan throughout the day, picking apart the piece line by line, another *USA Today* reporter got a message from an administration official: The Bush aide wouldn't be able to attend the Correspondents' dinner with the paper after all.

Coincidence? Maybe, but so far no White House aides have accepted an invitation from *USA Today*. Veteran correspondents like McQuillan—he's a former WHCA president and has attended the dinner since the Carter years—argue no administration in memory has so aggressively stage-managed the event. Another former WHCA president, longtime *U.S. News & World Report* White House reporter Ken Walsh, says the Bushies seem "more methodical and calculating about how they are allotting White House guests." Says another scribe, "I've never seen any White House actually try to get organized for the dinner. No one has ever done it." When one correspondent asked a mid-level White House staffer to the dinner, he says, "She had to get permission. She was frankly nervous about it."

Originally, the 88-year-old dinner served as an opportunity for reporters to get to know, in a more intimate setting, the people they cover. Though the growth and celebrification of the event has long since eclipsed that original purpose, at least the media still controlled things. Until now. Whereas in the past reporters invited their White House sources out for the evening, now the Bush White House decides who eats with whom. In other words, with the WHCA dinner, the Bushies' obsession with control may have reached its absurd climax.

The scramble among Washington reporters to secure high-profile guests for the affair has long brought out the most high schoolish behavior in the White House press corps. And Hughes's meddling has made the annual popularity contest even more overwrought than usual. There are persistent but difficult to corroborate rumors that a certain reporter—described alternately as a correspondent for a wire service or "a second- or third-tier news organization"—triggered the crackdown by inviting most of the White House before his fellow hacks had a chance. "[He] apparently invited every senior official in the White House many months ago," gripes one newspaperman. "I have heard that [he] sent a blanket invitation to everyone," says another, a little conspiratorially.

However it started, the crackdown has merely intensified journalists' anxiety. "We've yet to hear who we are getting," says a nervous correspondent for a major daily. "We may be getting the shaft for all I know." And Hughes's interference has left some reporters out of the game altogether. *The Boston Globe*, realizing the degree of control the White House is exercising this year, skipped over administration officials, instead inviting right-wing ranter Ann Coulter. (She said yes.) A reporter for a mid-sized Western paper is similarly discouraged: "I heard that Karen was in charge of it, so I'm just kind of out of it right now. . . . I'm just going to wait a few weeks and then pick up whoever is left over."

In their frustration, some reporters have taken to bad-mouthing their more successful peers. *U.S. News*'s Walsh is widely considered one of the best guest-mongerers in Washington. "[Walsh] starts inviting people half a year in advance or more!" complains a competitor. "He works it so hard." And it helps. Secretary of Defense Don Rumsfeld, Budget Director Mitch Daniels, Commerce Secretary Don Evans, and White House Deputy Chief of Staff Josh Bolten will all be joining Walsh for the May 4 bash. *The Washington Post*, though rejected by Condi Rice, received yeses from Christie Whitman and Hughes herself. The Associated Press' Ron Fournier has secured Karl Rove, while *USA Today*, despite its heresy, will dine with Colin Powell. (Invitations to Cabinet secretaries apparently don't fall under Hughes's purview.)

Reporters worry that White House control over guest selection is a way to punish publications that criticize the president or, worse, is a sneaky means of figuring out who's leaking to whom. But the White House says it's simply trying to ensure that staffers are dispersed equitably. "It's a clearinghouse rather than a tracking system," says a Bushie intimately familiar with the process. (Considering how things have been divvied up so far, though, few buy this excuse. Upon hearing Walsh's long list of guests, one reporter exclaimed, "Oh, and they are trying to disperse everyone, right? I mean, come on.")

One person close to the White House has a different explanation for Hughes's oversight: It gives staffers a "Karen won't let me" excuse. "I think they do it so they can give Karl Rove a reason to say, 'Oh, I can't commit to it right now, I have to run this through [the press office],'" says a White House correspondent. And, in fact, this is pretty much the line Rove has been giving journalists in response to dinner invites. Explains another reporter, "I got a handwritten note in the mail from Karl today saying, 'Thank you so much for your invitation to the White House Correspondents' Dinner but I've been told to stiff [you] and go with the AP instead.'"

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The Fall of Saddam

Robert Zelnick is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution and acting director of the Department of Journalism at Boston University.

On the day Saddam Hussein falls, there will be dancing in the streets of Baghdad. The country will not implode. Military analysts will ponder a victory that was less costly than many projected. States such as Syria and Iran will proclaim their aversion to terrorism. NATO will forget its early opposition.

Now, during the prebattle period, naysayers are having their day. Why Iraq? It is no worse than others on the "axis of evil." After all, Iran has longer-range missiles and sells more weapons. North Korea may already be nuclear.

They caution against, in Al Gore's words, "wishful thinking based on best-case scenarios." **Iraq is tougher than the Taliban;** the Iraqi National Congress is no Northern Alliance.

And they note international concern. The Saudis have an excess of caution, and the Turks, an excess of Kurds. Impoverished Moscow and wealthy France see billions in unpaid Iraqi debt. Other European friends resent seeing their military irrelevance displayed.

For all its malfeasance, however, Iran is a society where political evolution seems plausible. North Korea plays a reckless game fueled by the paranoia of its leadership. But it has no external designs, and past conduct suggests a willingness to rein in its most troublesome programs, for a price.

Saddam's Iraq is in a class by itself. It has launched two wars against neighboring states and fired Scud missiles against a third. Saddam attempted to kill a former U.S. president and routinely violates "no-fly zones" established to limit his ability to annihilate his own people. Iraq has used chemical weapons on the battlefield and to quash domestic unrest. Saddam maintained a covert nuclear program and sought to develop biological weapons, harassing United Nation inspectors sent to enforce the ban. The compelling insight embraced by the decision to dislodge Saddam is that **the war against terrorism cannot be won if the war against weapons of mass destruction is lost.**

Before the Persian Gulf War, military experts exaggerated Iraqi military power. In the event, Saddam's "battle-hardened" divisions were depleted by desertion, their morale shattered by indiscipline and American bombs. Save for a lucky Scud missile that crashed into military barracks in Dhahran, the United States lost more troops to "friendly fire" than to Iraqi guns.

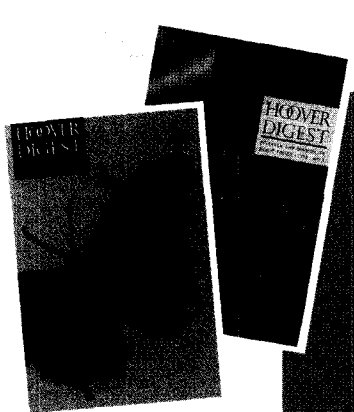
Today Iraq's army is even smaller, less well equipped, and less prepared than it was before the Persian Gulf War. And the U.S. advantage in highly accurate weapons—formidable then—is now overwhelming.

Nor should the comfort of friends like Saudi Arabia be controlling. Their tolerance of the antics of Osama bin Laden and other terrorists operating against anyone save the royal family has been well reported, as has the vitriolic brand of Islam taught in Saudi-financed schools. Turkey has some legitimate concerns, but they will fade if Kurdish nationalism is held in check.

As to NATO, its focus is Europe. Elsewhere, differences are common. We broke with our British and French friends over the 1956 Sinai campaign. There were differences too over Vietnam, and today, over Israel. But at the end of the day, NATO members too will cheer the fall of Saddam and relish the reduced threat his demise will signal.

— Robert Zelnick

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.



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All of which should ensure that this year's dinner goes more smoothly than the last. According to Frank Bruni's new book about the president, *Ambling into History*, last year Hughes merely scoured the seating chart at such dinners. Now she's constructing it. And last year Bush had to worry about comedian Darrell Hammond of "Saturday Night Live," who provided the entertainment. Much to the crowd's amazement, Hammond stuck to his Clinton and Gore jokes, even though he had prepared some Bush material before the gig. A person familiar with the incident says Hammond ditched his Bush material after a terse backstage encounter with the president before the performance. But the White House need not worry about rough jokes this time. This year's performer is ABC's Drew Carey, a conservative activist who at Bush's invitation marched in the inaugural parade and hosted an inaugural ball. "He's a fan of mine," Carey gushed to a reporter at the time. Now, if they could only rid the Correspondents' dinner of all those pesky correspondents. ■

Jerusalem Dispatch

Labor Lost

By YOSSI KLEIN HALEVI

"OY, OY, OY," said a leading figure in the Labor Party when I informed him that I was writing an article about the party's future. "You must be planning a very short article," added a former aide to Ehud Barak.

With Ariel Sharon faltering in the polls, terrorism at an all-time high, the economy in drastic decline, and spirits so low that one newspaper recently devoted its weekend magazine to a symposium on whether the Jewish state has a future, one might expect Labor to act as a real opposition party. Instead, it is paralyzed, terrified of toppling the unity government in which it serves as junior member and facing the electorate on its own. And for good reason: The party that founded the state has no vision, no blueprint, no inspiring or coherent leadership. Labor leaders know the public wouldn't forgive them for dismantling the unity government—which a majority of Israelis still support—especially during war. Indeed, much of the public blames Labor and its empowerment of Yasir Arafat for creating this war in the first place. A recent cartoon in the newspaper *Maariv* depicted Arafat as the Grim Reaper driving a car with a bumper sticker that read, "THANKS, FRIEND"—a takeoff on the "SHALOM, CHAVER" memorial stickers for Yitzhak Rabin still found on many Israelis' cars.

During the 1990s the Oslo peace process defined Labor's identity. But today Oslo has become a dirty word even among party activists. "Oslo, Shmoslo," snapped party Chairman and Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer at a recent meeting with Arab Labor activists. One recent poll of registered Labor voters showed an astonishing 62 percent in favor of scrapping the Oslo agreements and beginning negotiations all over again. At a recent Labor convention of hundreds of local activists—convened to debate Yossi Beilin's demand that the party quit the government—Rabin's photograph hung on the wall, but otherwise Likud members would have felt at home. When Beilin, the prime mover behind Oslo, rose to speak, he was shouted down by dozens of enraged activists, who taunted him for defending Arafat.

Labor leaders say their presence in the unity government has kept Sharon from destroying the Palestinian Authority and provoking wider war. And they cite Sharon's recent reversal of his vow not to negotiate under fire as proof of their effectiveness. But that implies Labor's participation is based on principle. During the recent party conference, Trade and Industry Minister Dalia Itzik revealed the party's real motive for staying in government: fear. Turning to Beilin from the podium, she said, "What can we do, Yossi? You're the only one here with a program, but the public has no faith in it. If we quit now, we'll remain an eternal opposition."

For all Sharon's decline in the polls, he would still easily defeat any Labor contender; Ben-Eliezer would lose by almost a three-to-one margin. When the defense minister threatened to quit last week during a cabinet shouting match with Sharon, the prime minister demonstratively showed him the door. "Leave, leave the government," taunted Sharon. "The results [of the next election] are already known—you'll be wiped out." Indeed, one Labor insider fears the party could drop from its current 23 seats to a mere 15 in the next election—barely 10 percent of the Knesset.

IN THEORY, Ben-Eliezer should be the antidote to Labor's crisis. He is a hawkish dove, the only kind of Labor leader the public trusts. A former commando and brigadier-general who was wounded seven times during his 30-year military career, he was the first member of Barak's Cabinet to insist on the futility of negotiating with Arafat, and he urged the formation of a unity government. (Had Barak listened, he'd still be prime minister.) The Iraqi-born Ben-Eliezer—whom everyone calls by his Arabic name, Fuad—also benefits from his ethnicity: As the first Sephardi to head Labor, he can appeal to Sephardi voters who still mistrust Labor as the party of the Ashkenazi elite.

And Ben-Eliezer is a good politician. Where Barak despised the party and tried to replace it with a failed coalition called One Israel, Ben-Eliezer patiently travels the country, revitalizing party branches. He is loyal and emotional; at every meeting with local activists, says an aide, Ben-Eliezer is handed notes with requests for help—for an unemployed son, for a daughter lost in Nepal. "In the car on the way home, he asks me to read each note and then immediately gets on the phone and calls everyone and his sister to try to help," she says.

But Ben-Eliezer has also been disastrously impolitic. He can be embarrassingly petty, publicly feuding not only with Sharon but with Chief of Staff Shaul Mofaz over who has the authority to determine the extent of military reprisals for Palestinian terror attacks. For aides, cleaning up after Fuad's latest gaffe is simply part of the job. During a recent trip to Washington, he revealed to Israeli journalists the details of a confidential meeting with Condoleezza Rice, including disparaging remarks she'd supposedly made about Arafat.

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ANTI-SEMITISM.
It's not a HISTORY LESSON.
It's a CURRENT EVENT.

Part 3. Old Hatreds in New Forms in Europe

It is not yet 60 years after the murder of 6,000,000 Jews in the Holocaust, and once again we see anti-Semitism coming back strongly in Europe.

This time it is fueled by the virulent anti-Semitic campaigns being spread throughout the Arab world and spilling over through some immigrants and the new media into France, England, Belgium and other countries.

Daily attacks on Jews and their institutions are taking place in France while the government looks the other way. Leading French media are filled with stories slanted against Israel, further heating up a climate in which leadership of the Jewish community is virtually alone fighting anti-Semitic attacks.

In England, Christian clerics are using anti-Jewish rhetoric suppressed since the Holocaust. Not only are we hearing "Zionism is racism" and Israel is illegitimate, but also the old, destructive "replacement theology" — the notion that Judaism has been replaced as a religion.

Jews are being targeted all over again — in old and new ways — with Israel being used as the excuse this time. ADL is deeply concerned with this rise in global anti-Semitism. We have put our resources into the battle. We urge the nations of the world and good people everywhere to join us in meeting this challenge to prevent history from repeating itself.

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"FUAD RAN TO TELL THE GUYS," read one Israeli headline—the local phrase for bragging about sexual exploits. An outraged Bush administration hinted that Ben-Eliezer wouldn't be welcomed back, forcing him to publicly apologize.

Yet no one else in the party offers a more credible alternative. One by one, Labor's best hopes have self-destructed. Few long for the return of Barak, who is tainted by failure on every front, from peacemaking to social policy. Knesset Speaker Avraham Burg, a dove in a skullcap, would make an interesting prime minister for a post-peace Israel, helping heal the country's schisms; but Burg, who has never held a Cabinet position and seems prepared to yield to almost any Arab territorial demand, has no chance of winning the public's trust now. And the Moroccan-born Shlomo Ben-Ami, once among Labor's front-runners, has likewise become unelectable: He is despised by Arab voters for serving as internal security minister during the Arab-Israeli riots of autumn 2000, when police shot dead 13 Arab citizens. And with the party in serious decline among Jewish voters, no Labor candidate can hope to win without Arab support.

Ben-Eliezer's strategy is to try to create an independent identity while remaining, for now, Sharon's defense minister. But the distinctions he's drawn seem marginal or insincere. For instance, Ben-Eliezer supports Sharon's policy of attacking Palestinian territory, but he opposes attacks in Ramallah—where Arafat has his headquarters—so as not to humiliate the Palestinian leader. Until recently, he publicly asserted that Arafat had "completed his historical role"; now he says feebly that Arafat may change and become a partner in the future.

As dangerous as it would be for Labor to leave the unity government, it may find its fragile identity further eroded by remaining inside it as well. As Beilin put it at the Labor conference, "The nation will continue to love the unity government; they just won't love us. And what if Sharon, who is no less shrewd than us, dismantles the government in four months and we're caught with our pants down? Who exactly is it that won't forgive us if we quit now?" From the crowd, angry activists answered: "The people!" In truth, the people may not forgive the party no matter what it does. ■

Zinni's real mission.

Cover Boy

By JANINE ZACHARIA

PUBLICLY, THE BUSH administration says there is no link between the Israeli-Palestinian war and the one Washington wants to launch against Iraq. Linkage makes life complicated: It forces American leaders to pressure Israel—something no U.S. politician likes to do—in order to gain Arab cooperation against Saddam Hussein; and it holds any offensive against the Iraqi leader hostage to the whims of Yasir Arafat. That's why Vice President Dick Cheney, kicking off his Middle East tour last week, told reporters in London that such a connection was "inappropriate," and why President George W. Bush a few days later said that each policy "stands on its own." It's also why almost everyone in Washington will tell you—on the record—that it's merely happenstance that Cheney and U.S. Special Envoy Anthony Zinni were in the Middle East at the same time.

Off the record, it's another story. Officials admit that Zinni's primary goal was to give Cheney cover, to show the Arabs that Washington is doing something about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. According to a State Department official, an internal memo drafted three weeks ago states it flat out. Titled "Managing the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and Mobilizing Arab Support," and put out by the State Department's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, the memo says the United States must augment Cheney's tour with a new Zinni truce mission in order to win Arab support for a war against Iraq. As one senior administration official puts it, "This Zinni trip is entirely about the Cheney trip."

In that limited goal, Zinni has probably already succeeded. He gave Cheney something to say when Arab leaders vented about America's indifference in the face of escalating Israeli-Palestinian violence. He may even succeed in reducing that violence for a while—particularly because his trip coincides with an Israeli pullback from the West Bank that probably would have happened anyway. But when it comes to the public rationale for Zinni's trip—to alter the conflict's dismal trajectory and revive something resembling a peace process—failure is almost certain. In fact, failure is pretty much what most people in the Bush administration expect.

SPEAKING TO JOURNALISTS in recent days, Anthony Zinni has sounded like the world's most indomitable optimist. But privately, he has been much more dour. During his last mission, in January, the retired Marine general told the two sides he would only return once they got their acts together. For Arafat, Zinni left a list of five demands. He insisted that the Palestinian leader arrest 33 specific terrorists; arrest the killers of Israeli Tourism Minister Rehavam Ze'evi; take responsibility for the *Karine A* arms shipment from Iran; reduce incitement; and take tangible steps toward fighting terror. But Arafat has made only the slightest progress toward these goals. In particular, he has failed to arrest all 33 terrorists on the list and has made no serious effort to stop the almost-daily Palestinian attacks on Israeli soldiers and civilians. Given these failures, Zinni was all too aware of the credibility problem he faced if he went back now. "Zinni is not a little kid. He did not want his credibility wasted," says one diplomat who spoke to Zinni before his departure.

The Pentagon, too, was less than enthusiastic about Zinni's mission, seeing it as a reward to Arafat for intensifying Palestinian terror. And even some in the administration who support a greater American diplomatic role pushed for sending not Zinni, but rather CIA Director George Tenet, who last June hashed out the security plan Zinni is trying to

JANINE ZACHARIA is Washington correspondent for *The Jerusalem Post*.

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implement and who is better known by both sides. They only relented when it became clear that Tenet was too busy with the war on terrorism to go.

Zinni, a longtime associate of Colin Powell's, was the State Department's choice. And pressure from Egypt's Hosni Mubarak, who left Washington on March 6—the day before Bush announced Zinni's trip—helped seal the decision. But even at Foggy Bottom, they worry about Zinni's credibility. "I think any concerns we had about that [Zinni's credibility], we felt like we had to set aside because of the seriousness of the situation," says one State Department official. Underscoring how little the State Department was investing in Zinni's trip is the fact that during the week between Bush's announcement that Zinni would return and his actual departure, the ex-Marine traveled only once from his home in Williamsburg, Virginia, to the State Department for consultations.

Zinni's fundamental problem is that while realities in the region have evolved sufficiently since his last visit to force an intensified U.S. role, they haven't changed nearly enough to alter the dynamics on the ground. The first thing that has changed, of course, is the Bush administration's growing effort to lay the diplomatic groundwork for an attack on Iraq—an effort that requires at the least the appearance of American pressure on Ariel Sharon and Arafat to halt the violence. The second is Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah's offer to normalize ties with Israel in exchange for a full withdrawal from all occupied territory. To the State Department, this offers the hope that if Zinni calms things down, and if Sharon can be persuaded to allow Arafat to travel to the Arab summit in Beirut on March 27, then Abdullah might offer his proposal formally, reigniting the peace process. A third factor is crumbling support in Israel for Sharon's hardline approach, which has made the prime minister more willing to entertain other strategies for reining in Palestinian violence. Zinni's visit is in Israel's interest, U.S. Ambassador to Israel Daniel Kurtzer told Sharon just before the announcement of the envoy's dispatch, because it would focus on Arafat's compliance with the Tenet security plan, which commits Arafat to arresting terrorists and cooperating with Israel to prevent attacks. (The same message was delivered to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, Israel's lobby in Washington, to calm their fears that Zinni was being sent to pressure Israel.)

BUT WHAT HASN'T changed since Zinni's last visit are the basic policies of both Arafat and Sharon. Sharon has withdrawn Israeli troops from Ramallah and other West Bank cities, and he has abandoned his demand for seven days of quiet as a precondition for starting cease-fire talks. But he has also told his Cabinet that Israel will respond militarily to future terrorist attacks. Which isn't surprising, given that if he didn't his government might well fall.

And Arafat, far from being chastened by Sharon's hardline and America's tough talk, looks less inclined than ever to genuinely crack down on terrorism. After all, his decision to essentially give Palestinian terrorists a green light to attack Israel has paid handsome diplomatic dividends. Powell is talking to him on the telephone again. Zinni is embracing him and promising that U.S. monitors will watch over any cease-fire, something Arafat has demanded and Sharon fears. And even Cheney—one of Arafat's biggest detractors within the administration—has offered to meet with him, albeit only if he implements the Tenet plan.

To further entice the Palestinian leader—and boost Zinni's and Cheney's trips—on March 12 the United States swiftly drafted and passed a U.N. Security Council resolution endorsing the concept of a Palestinian state, a reversal of America's long-standing insistence that the Security Council was the wrong forum for the peace process. But by giving countries like Russia and France an opening for greater involvement in the conflict, the Bush administration may have reduced its leverage over Arafat even further. "We may well see this decision come home to haunt us in the future when others try to use the Council and build on this resolution," frets one former senior White House official who handled Middle East diplomacy.

Which is why it should come as little surprise that administration officials don't expect Zinni's trip to have much long-term effect. "He doesn't have anything new," says a senior administration official. Asked about Zinni's strategy, another administration official charged with planning the ex-Marine's mission jokes, "You'd be frightened if you saw how empty my head is." Unfortunately, it's all too evident already. ■

TOM NICK COCOTOS

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Durham Dispatch

Code Blue

By JASON ZENGERLE

NORTH CAROLINA DOESN'T exactly have a history of electing blacks to high political office. So it was considered a sign of progress when, in 1991, a black Democratic legislator named Dan Blue was chosen by his colleagues to be speaker of the North Carolina House of Representatives. "For the first time," Raleigh's *The News & Observer* declared, "North Carolina voters will get to see a black man wielding real power in state government." And it was widely predicted that Blue—who was only 41 at the time—would go on to wield even more power in the future. Former Governor and then-Senator Terry Sanford, at the time the most prominent Democrat in North Carolina, touted Blue as a future governor. "Dan Blue," Sanford said, "has been a first-rate man."

But little more than a decade later, Blue's political career hasn't quite turned out as planned. Although he is still a state legislator, and Democrats control North Carolina's House of Representatives, Blue is no longer speaker. And while he is running in the Democratic primary for the U.S. Senate seat being vacated by Jesse Helms, he's a decided underdog—abandoned by the same Democratic establishment that once applauded his upward progress. North Carolina's House speaker and Senate leader are both publicly supporting Blue's main rival for the nomination, former Clinton administration official Erskine Bowles. (North Carolina Secretary of State Elaine Marshall is the other major Democratic candidate in the race.) Behind the scenes, a host of other prominent Democrats—including many close to current Governor Mike Easley and former Governor Jim Hunt—are helping Bowles. Even the state AFL-CIO has endorsed Bowles—an odd move considering that in the Clinton administration Bowles vocally supported NAFTA, which labor blames for North Carolina's loss of more than 100,000 textile and manufacturing jobs. (Prior to receiving the endorsement, Bowles changed his position on the trade agreement.) This lack of establishment support has hurt Blue's fund-raising. While Bowles has raked in $1.73 million, according to the most recent campaign finance filings, Blue has raised only $201,000. Summing up Blue's plight, one Democrat says succinctly, "He is an outcast."

Of course, lots of rising political stars don't fulfill their potential. But it's been a particular problem for black Democrats. In 1991, when Blue was elected speaker, he was part of what seemed a whole new generation of black Democrats amassing the political credentials needed to run for high office. (Between 1970 and 1990, the number of black elected officials in the United States increased from 1,469 to 7,370.) The year before Blue was elected speaker, Virginia's L. Douglas Wilder became the nation's first black to be elected governor; and one year after Blue's ascension, Carol Moseley-Braun of Illinois became the first African American woman elected to the Senate. Baltimore Mayor Kurt Schmoke was considered a good bet to soon join Wilder and Moseley-Braun on the larger political stage. "Perhaps this decade," political analyst William Schneider predicted in 1990, "we'll have a black on the national ticket."

Not only has that not happened, but by some measures black political power has actually regressed since Schneider's words. While black Democrats continue to win city, county, and down-ticket statewide offices, there are currently no African Americans in governor's mansions or in the U.S. Senate. And it doesn't look like that's going to change anytime soon. Just this week, Roland Burris—who in 1991 became Illinois's first black attorney general—lost that state's Democratic gubernatorial primary to a white challenger. And in New York, Carl McCall—a black Democrat who's served two terms as state comptroller—is in a fierce gubernatorial primary fight against Andrew Cuomo, who's never held elected office. In Louisiana, outgoing New Orleans Mayor Marc Morial unsuccessfully tried to amend his city's charter so he could serve a third term—reportedly because he knew that, despite two successful terms, his race meant he had little chance of winning higher office.

Indeed, the glass ceiling that black politicians appear to be hitting could eventually undo an implicit bargain the Democratic Party struck with African Americans years ago. In many states, particularly in the South, Democrats cannot win statewide unless they receive the overwhelming support of black voters. In exchange for this support, black voters—and, perhaps more importantly, the black Democratic politicians who bring black voters to the polls on behalf of their white colleagues—expected this biracial coalition to eventually elect black Democrats to high office as well. But so far it hasn't, and some black Democrats are getting frustrated. Take Mickey Michaux, a black North Carolina state representative who supports Blue's Senate bid. "Dan has really paid his dues as far as the Democratic Party is concerned. I don't think they're really giving him the credit that's due to him," says Michaux. "They want our vote, but when it comes to dividing up the spoils, they forget about that. They forget about our vote, that it was us who helped put them there." And if Democratic politicians keep forgetting, it's anyone's guess how long black voters will continue putting them there.

Dan Blue likes to portray himself as a typical North Carolinian—and with good reason. The son of a tenant farmer, he grew up in rural Eastern North Carolina before leaving home to attend one of the state's public universities—the historically black North Carolina Central in Durham. After college, Blue moved across the city to attend law school at Duke, and then settled in nearby Raleigh, where he built a successful legal practice. His life story—progressing from rural, blue-collar roots to metropolitan, white-collar success—is a common one in North Carolina. "Just as North Carolina has emerged," Blue has said, "so have I."

But Blue is typical in another way as well: His is the story of a generation of black Democrats. Blue left for college in 1966 intending to become a scientist. (Indeed, he majored in chemistry and math.) But the assassinations of Martin

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Luther King Jr. and Robert Kennedy turned his mind to politics. At N.C. Central, Blue was swept up by the civil rights movement, and he began leading sit-ins and protests. And, like many civil rights activists—John Lewis, Marion Barry, James Clyburn—Blue became a committed Democrat. He volunteered on his first Democratic campaign in 1968 and has poured himself into the party ever since. "I've served from the precinct committee to the county executive committee to the state executive committee to the Democratic National Committee," Blue boasts. In 1992 and 1996, he chaired the Clinton-Gore campaign in North Carolina. And, of course, Blue has worked on his own campaigns: He was first elected to the state House of Representatives in 1980.

Unlike some black Democrats, though, Blue has tried to appeal to more than just a narrow ethnic base. Although he currently represents a majority-black district, Blue was originally elected to the state House as an at-large candidate in predominately white Wake County. (Ironically, in 1984 a federal court ruled that the at-large seats in Wake County violated the Voting Rights Act and mandated that the six representatives from Wake County run in single-member districts, leading to the creation of Blue's majority-black district.) And to be elected speaker in 1991, Blue had to win over rural, white legislators who, although Democrats, represented districts that routinely voted for Jesse Helms. Blue, as one state representative explained to *The New York Times* on the occasion of his election as speaker, was a "Democrat [who] is neither liberal nor conservative, but moderate, mainstream in his viewpoint."

By all accounts, Blue was a good speaker of the House, negotiating a grand compromise—$600 million in spending cuts; $600 million in increased taxes—that solved the state's $1.2 billion deficit in 1991. He was easily reelected speaker in 1993; but the following year the Gingrich Revolution swept the Democrats from power in the North Carolina State House, and Blue lost his speakership. What happened next is open to interpretation: Some say Blue absented himself from the Democratic caucus during its wilderness years; others contend that the caucus, spooked by its loss in 1994, drifted rightward and essentially abandoned Blue.

Either way, the result was that in 1998, after Democrats took back the North Carolina House, the caucus passed over Blue and selected a white, conservative legislator named Jim Black as its choice for speaker. Blue launched a renegade bid for the speakership with support from a handful of black Democrats—who argued that their party owed its reclaimed House majority to high turnout among blacks and thus owed Blue the job—and a number of Republicans, who had worked out a power-sharing deal in exchange for their votes. But Blue ended up losing by one vote. Since then, he has been a thorn in the side of the Democratic leadership in the statehouse. Last year Blue—along with some of the other renegade Democrats who supported his failed speaker bid—blocked a Democratic tax increase plan and delayed passage of the budget for one month.

This, claim some Democrats, is why the party establishment has not backed Blue's Senate campaign. "The word's out," says one Democrat, "and the word is that Dan's been disloyal." But something else is giving Democrats pause as well: Blue's race. In 1990 and again in 1996, North Carolina Democrats nominated a black candidate, Harvey Gantt, for Helms's Senate seat; Gantt lost both times. And while black candidates have since won statewide races for down-ticket posts like state auditor, some wonder whether North Carolina is ready to elect a black candidate to a top-of-the-ticket office. "A lot of folks have said that we've already run Dan Blue [i.e., a black candidate] twice and got beaten twice," explains one Democrat, who notes that before Bowles decided to run in the primary against Blue, the party establishment was beseeching white politicians like former Governor Jim Hunt and Representative Bob Etheridge to throw their hats in the ring. "People are spooked by what happened to Gantt.... Race is still a factor in this state. Shame on North Carolina, but it's true." Georgia Democrats came to a similar conclusion in 1990 when they picked Zell Miller over Andrew Young as their gubernatorial nominee; and Illinois Democrats, in passing over Burris in this week's gubernatorial primary, seemed to as well.

Blue rejects such thinking, noting that in losing to Helms, Gantt was in good company: Helms, after all, vanquished plenty of Democratic challengers during his 30 years in the Senate. "That's like saying we should never have somebody like Jim Hunt [who lost to Helms in 1984]—a white male from Eastern North Carolina who had been governor—run again statewide because he couldn't get elected," says Blue. But even with Helms out of the picture, and the supposedly kinder-and-gentler Liddy Dole a shoo-in to win the Republican nomination, some Democrats aren't so sure Blue's race wouldn't be an issue. "I can already see the thirty-second spot Dole runs against Dan," frets one Democrat. "There would be pictures of her standing with Reagan and Bush. She would say, 'While I was standing firm with Ronald Reagan, Dan Blue was standing with his candidate of choice.' And guess who that was? Jesse Jackson! That would be devastating."

Perhaps trying to make a virtue of necessity, Blue is running to the left. He attacks Bowles for his past support of NAFTA and insufficient opposition to vouchers—the latter stance won Blue the endorsement of the North Carolina teachers' union—and argues that the murky middle, which Bowles is obviously seeking to occupy, is no place to beat Dole. "There's a genuine contrast between my consistent positions and those of the presumptive Republican nominee's," Blue says.

Blue has even tried to turn his lack of cash into a populist pitch. "I don't have a bunch of investment bankers to finance my campaign," he says. "[But] we don't need the kind of money that Erskine Bowles is going to spend.... I don't want to just be shooting slick thirty-second TV ads at people.... I'll deal directly with voters on a one-on-one basis, in small groups, to empower the voters to take back their democracy."

On a recent day in March, Blue was trying to do exactly that, visiting a Durham high school at 7:30 a.m.—this, after getting back from a much-needed Washington fund-raiser only five hours earlier—to eat a breakfast cooked by culinary-arts students. He then gave a talk on black history to a group of elementary school students. And after that he toured a Baptist-church-run charter school in a rundown section of

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Durham. Blue was indeed meeting with people one-on-one; the problem was that, save for a few teachers and parents, none of them were voters. Standing in the middle of a computer lab, the candidate was mobbed by inquisitive children. It was the kind of scene that would have been perfect for one of those slick 30-second TV ads Blue disparages—if only there had been a video crew on hand to film it. Instead, Blue's campaign manager took pictures with a disposable camera; his wife, meanwhile, gave some campaign literature to one of the youngsters. "My husband's running for Senate," she told him. "Here, you can take this home to your parents."

Later that day, Blue did finally meet up with some people who were old enough to vote, addressing a group of about 20 senior citizens at a Durham senior center. Speaking in the 15-minute slot after bingo and before lunch, Blue made his pitch. "I've done as much as I can do at the state level. I've put in my time," he said. "And I want to go to Washington to take the seat that's currently occupied by Jesse Helms." He then asked the group for more than their votes. "I need all of you to sign up and volunteer and tell people to vote for Dan Blue on May seventh." (Because of a court case, the Democratic primary has since been postponed and will likely be held in the summer.) Blue's campaign manager passed around a legal pad for people to write down their names and phone numbers, and a number of the seniors complied. But when I approached one woman—who earlier had told Blue she had admired him for 22 years—to ask what kind of volunteer work she planned to do, she shook her head and said none. "I'm on dialysis three days a week," she explained. "It takes a lot out of you." Once again, it seemed that Dan Blue was on his own. ■

What the Teamsters want from George W.

Dirty Deal

By JOHN B. JUDIS

IT'S NOT HARD to figure out why the Bush administration and the Republican congressional leadership are wooing the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. They want the union to lobby for opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) to oil drilling. And they *really* want support and endorsements in states like Michigan and Ohio, where the union's members may hold the balance of power in key House and Senate races—and even in the 2004 presidential election.

Less well understood is why Teamster President James P. Hoffa—who endorsed Al Gore and agrees with the Democrats on most issues—is courting the Republicans right back. Here's a hint: It's not ANWR. There are only about 7,000 Teamsters in Alaska, and none of them work in oil fields. Hoffa is much more concerned about another acronym—one that makes the front page far less often. He's desperate to get rid of something called the Independent Review Board (IRB). And he thinks the GOP can help.

The IRB was established in 1992, three years after the Teamsters signed a consent order settling the Justice Department's suit charging that the union was "a wholly owned subsidiary of organized crime" and had made "a devil's pact with La Cosa Nostra." The IRB, which is composed of a three-member panel and an investigative unit, has the power to force sworn testimony from Teamsters it suspects of corruption or mob association and to expel those it charges with corruption. Over the last nine years it has ousted or suspended more than 500 individual Teamsters and recommended that the international union place 27 locals under trusteeship.

Hoffa and other top Teamsters say the IRB has served its purpose. "We have come full circle and have cleaned up our union," Hoffa told the Teamster convention last June. The union also claims it has put in place safeguards to prevent further corruption and mob influence. Two years ago Hoffa announced an internal ethics-enforcement program called RISE (Respect, Integrity, Strength and Ethics), to be run by former federal prosecutor and organized crime expert Ed Stier. "It's time for the government to move out. We've created programs where the union is clean, and it's time for us to get from under government supervision," Hoffa declared last August. "We're going to keep pressing that. And we're going to talk to everybody we can to make sure that happens."

The Teamsters are talking to two people in particular, both Republicans. The first is Michigan Representative Peter Hoekstra, chairman of a House subcommittee that has held hearings into the IRB and the Teamsters. The second is George W. Bush. The president can't shut down the IRB on his own; but, if he recommends it, the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York, a Bush appointee, will follow suit, and federal Judge Loretta Preska will probably comply.

Hoffa has made considerable progress in winning over both men. Grateful for the hearings that Hoekstra had held exposing illegal campaign activities by Hoffa's predecessor and rival Ron Carey, the Teamsters endorsed Hoekstra's reelection in April 2000—even though in 1999 the AFL-CIO had given the congressman a zero rating, and the Teamster local in Hoekstra's district opposed him. Since then, Hoekstra has become Hoffa's greatest booster and the IRB's sworn foe. "I know Jim. He wants the union to have control of its own policing," says Hoekstra. "And he wants to put in place a system his members have confidence in. This guy more than anyone else in the labor movement is focused on his membership." Bush

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is also moving steadily into Hoffa's camp. At a Labor Day Teamster gathering in Detroit, Bush said, "Let me tell you another thing about Jimmy Hoffa. He's running a good union. And in an above-board way, in an above-board way. And make no mistake about it, people are beginning to notice, particularly in Washington, D.C." And to show just how much people in Washington have noticed, Bush invited Hoffa to sit in the president's guest box at this year's State of the Union address—an honor normally reserved for national heroes.

Hoffa may be close to achieving his goal of shutting down the IRB. Hoekstra, for one, believes momentum is building. But there's a problem with this rush to declare the Teamsters completely clean: They're not. While the union is no longer "a wholly owned subsidiary of organized crime," it is still plagued by corruption; ex-felons and people with reputed mob associations lurk around the edges of key Teamster locals seeking influence over the union. Stier's hiring was a step in the right direction, but RISE is not fully functioning, and Hoffa and other Teamster brass have been slow both to police themselves and to cooperate with the IRB.

Indeed, corruption within the Teamsters may actually have *increased* in recent years, as Hoffa has resurrected a group of suspect union officials who were ousted by the IRB or relegated to the sidelines under Carey. Hoffa has been in office only a little more than two years, but already the IRB has charged several Teamster officials with corruption and with mob associations. And some of them are close to Hoffa himself.

Take Mike Bane, the president of Local 614 near Detroit, to which Hoffa himself belongs. Bane was convicted in 1977 of embezzling union money; sentenced to six months in jail; and barred by the union from holding office for five years. Once his five years were up, he was hired as the business agent for Local 614 and was elected president in 1989. Ever since 1991, when he tried to get the Teamsters to change their constitution to allow Hoffa—who had not yet served two years in a Teamster trade—to run for president, Bane has been one of Hoffa's most enthusiastic supporters. But he has not broken with his past. In December 2000 the IRB charged that Bane had given "intentionally misleading testimony" about his associations with "some members of organized crime in Detroit and Chicago." The IRB panel stripped Bane of his position last July, despite an attempt by Hoffa and the Teamster leadership to deprive it of jurisdiction over the case.

Teamster Spokesman Bret Caldwell dismisses the Bane case because Bane was "removed for lying to investigators" about events that were "fourteen years old"; but according to the IRB, Bane had maintained and lied about his associations with organized crime figures during the 1990s as well as the 1980s. What Bane did, however, pales before another Teamster corruption case that is currently pending before the IRB. It involves two high-ranking Teamster officials from Chicago who are among Hoffa's staunchest allies. The two officials, with the help of ex-convicts, tried to get a Teamster local in Las Vegas to accept a deal with a nonunion company from Chicago that, in the words of the IRB investigation, "had a history of labor racketeering." The deal would have undermined the union's ability to represent its own members; but well after Hoffa knew what his allies were up to, he continued to back them, firing local officials who opposed them and frustrating the IRB's attempts to investigate. The story of what happened, reconstructed from the depositions and sometimes conflicting testimony given to the IRB and its investigators, suggests that, ANWR or no ANWR, the Teamsters are still not clean.

THE CHICAGO-BASED United Service Companies provides nonunion workers at low hourly rates to trade shows and conventions. Known as a "labor broker" or "labor leaser," United makes money by paying its workers even less—sometimes near-minimum wage with no benefits—than it receives for their services. The company's founder, Ben Stein, described by one former acquaintance as a "colorful hood," was convicted of bribing union officials and, according to the IRB, "was reported to have ties to organized crime figures," including notorious Chicago Teamster Dominic Senese. After Stein's death in 1996, Richard Simon—who according to the IRB "also knew Senese well"—became United's president and ran the company along with Stein's daughter. Simon hoped to expand United, a nonunion company, into Las Vegas; and in early 1999 he established United Temps of Las Vegas. But Simon had a problem. In Las Vegas, Teamsters Union Local 631 had a contract with the trade shows, called the "red book," to provide the workers itself.

From the standpoint of Las Vegas workers, Local 631 enjoyed a benevolent monopoly over hiring. Since Nevada is a right-to-work state, workers didn't have to belong to the Teamsters to get a job, but they did have to pay the union a fee of $40 per month. In exchange they got the same wages and benefits as Teamster workers. For the workers, it was a good system: In 1999 and 2000, the lowest-paid made $20.43 per hour if you factor in health and welfare benefits. But the system wasn't good for United Service at all. The trade shows couldn't undercut the red book. And worse still, Simon's own workers could hire themselves out through the Teamsters rather than through United and make much more than Simon would pay.

To succeed in Vegas, Simon had to undermine the Teamster monopoly. United had a history of such efforts. In 1966 Stein had been convicted of bribing union leaders, including a Chicago Teamster, to allow United to hire out nonunion workers—whom Stein paid as little as $1 per hour—to job sites that the unions controlled. And so in 1999 Simon set out to persuade the Las Vegas Teamsters to cede part of their labor market, even though by doing so they would violate their own contract. IRB investigators found no evidence that Simon himself used illegal tactics toward that end. What he had working for him was an ally, William Hogan Jr., the most powerful Teamster leader in Chicago—and a close friend of James P. Hoffa. Hogan in turn enlisted his protégé, Dane Passo, another powerful Hoffa ally. Together, Hogan and Passo would try to take command of Local 631 and write a contract that allowed Simon to evade the red book. They would later tell the IRB they were actually trying to bring United's workers into the Teamsters. But they rebuffed or ignored Las Vegas Teamsters who suggested organizing them.

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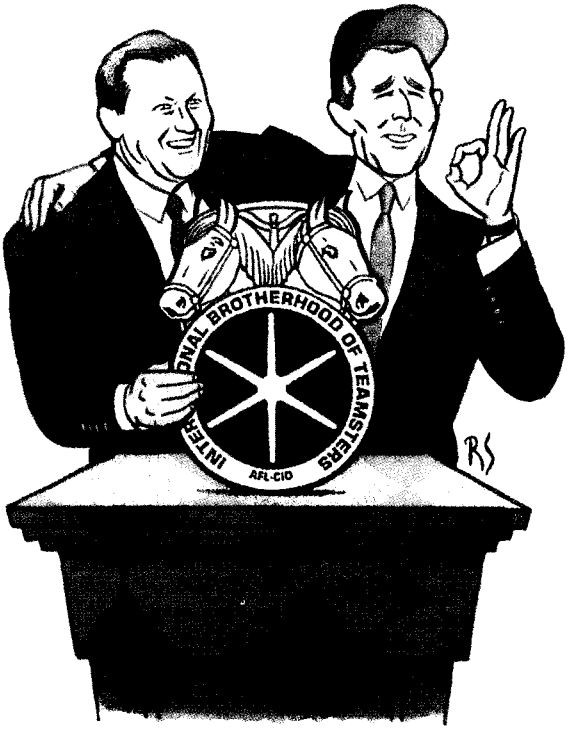
William Hogan Jr. was known in Chicago for running the Teamsters as a family business. "I am living proof that nepotism works," he once declared. Hogan, a short, blustery man with carefully coiffed white hair and gold jewelry, inherited Local 714 from his father in 1990. One of Hogan's brothers, his brother-in-law, and his son were also union officials. In 1994, when the average Teamster was making $25,000 per year, Hogan and his three relatives collected $613,271 in salary. The Hogans ran and owned shares in numerous businesses that hired Teamsters, so that Teamsters—sometimes without knowing it—often worked for Hogan enterprises. And the Hogans assigned relatives and family friends to prime jobs in the union's trade show/movie division, slighting other industry workers. Last year Hogan and his union settled a suit by workers who were hired through Local 714's dispatcher but were not allowed to join the union and were not informed that they could receive health insurance—even though the contractors were paying health benefits for them into the growing Teamster fund.

In 1996 the IRB recommended that Local 714 be placed in trusteeship because of widespread "nepotism and favoritism." Hogan was removed from office, and he withdrew from the second spot on Hoffa's national presidential ticket. But when the local was released from trusteeship in 1998, Hogan's son was elected secretary-treasurer and, thumbing his nose at the IRB, promptly appointed his father as vice president. Hogan was also made president of Joint Council 25, the body overseeing Teamster locals in Illinois and Northern Indiana. And by virtue of his longtime association with Hoffa, Hogan also became a powerful figure in the national organization. After Hoffa assumed office in 1999, he appointed Hogan an international representative—a lucrative position without specific responsibilities. By the year 2000, Hogan was pulling in $210,000 in Teamster salary. Oh yes, and over the last 30 years Chicago newspapers have linked the Hogans, Local 714, and their family enterprises to the Chicago mob. According to the *Chicago Tribune*, a federal investigator once described Local 714's payroll at a convention site as "a who's who in the Chicago crime syndicate."

Simon had served with Hogan on Chicago's Convention and Tourism Bureau and had known him for decades. But the two men had another, even more important link: Hogan's brother Michael was vice president of United Service. And by enlisting Michael Hogan to persuade Local 631 to let the company into Las Vegas, Simon probably ensured William Hogan's help. Indeed, in June 1999, William Hogan helped set up a meeting for his brother and Simon at Las Vegas's Rio Hotel with Timothy Murphy, Local 631's newly elected secretary-treasurer, and Murphy's dispatcher, the person responsible for sending workers to the trade shows. At the meeting, Simon and Michael Hogan proposed to the two Las Vegas Teamsters that the union allow United to provide workers when the local could not supply sufficient numbers on its own. But Murphy said the local was always able to meet the demand for workers by calling on other unions, including other Teamster locals. Simon also proposed that the contractors pay United Temps a flat fee that was lower than the lowest hourly wage a Teamster received and that they not be required to pay benefits. In exchange, Murphy recalled, United would kick back somewhere between $7 and $10 to Local 631 for each worker hired—far less than the $40 the Teamsters would get from other union workers. Murphy told Michael Hogan and Simon that their proposal "would possibly be illegal" and would "violate" the Teamster contract with the convention companies.

At that point, the only way to get the Teamsters to violate their own contract was to replace Murphy and his dispatcher with people who were more cooperative. Which is where Dane Passo came in. Passo grew up in Chicago and went to work as a truck driver for his uncle, a noted Chicago mob leader who was sent to jail in 1993 for 30 years for conspiracy to murder, among other things. Passo, short and blustery like Hogan but even louder and more prone to expletives, became a Teamster business agent in 1992 in Local 705, but was fired 13 months later when the IRB banned the local's president for embezzlement and other charges and placed the union in trusteeship. After losing his job, Passo became a loyal soldier in Hoffa's political army for the next six years, running the Chicago branch of his presidential campaigns in 1996 and 1998. When Hoffa became president in January 1999, he rewarded Passo with lucrative posts as special assistant to the president and international representative. At his first appearance at an AFL-CIO executive council meeting as Teamster president, Hoffa was accompanied by Passo and Hogan.



Hogan, who knew Passo from Chicago, described their relationship like that of father and son. And Passo played a crucial role in Hogan's efforts to influence Local 631. Soon after Passo took office in Washington as Hoffa's special assistant, a former member of Hogan's union began complaining to him about Murphy's leadership of the Vegas union. Passo brought the complaints to Hoffa's attention and asked to be appointed Hoffa's personal representative to Local 631, which would give him authority over Murphy. In November 1999 Hoffa granted Passo's request.

Over the next five months, Passo and Hogan lobbied top

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union officials against Murphy. And in April 2000 the lobbying paid off. After a climactic meeting at which Passo and Hogan, who had no official responsibilities in Las Vegas, confronted Murphy, Hoffa moved against Murphy—placing his local in trusteeship and appointing James Wilkerson, a retired Teamster official from Las Vegas, to run it.

HOGAN, PASSO, AND Simon mounted a furious campaign to get Wilkerson to sign an agreement with United Temps that would allow it to provide workers to trade-show contractors. After introducing Simon to Passo, Hogan relied on Passo—who had no experience negotiating contracts—to work out a deal with Simon and use his authority as special representative to impose it on the union. (Hogan claims he did not play a significant role; but according to the IRB, Hogan and Passo would confer at least 223 times by phone from April 2000 to November 2000.) By June, Passo and Simon had agreed to terms that they presented to Wilkerson. Under the agreement, United Temps would be paid $8 per hour for its employees without benefits—more than $12 per hour less than the lowest-paid Teamster. As for the actual United Temps workers, Passo says Simon told him that he would pay them $6 per hour without benefits. Passo insisted they would eventually become Teamsters, but how that would happen remained foggy.

Wilkerson explained to Passo and Simon that if he signed the agreement, Las Vegas's trade-show contractors would be legally able to pay Teamsters $8 per hour according to the "most favored nations" provision. That provision stipulated that if one contractor was allowed to hire workers at a lower rate, then all contractors were entitled to hire them at that rate. At a meeting that summer, Wilkerson told Passo, "You're wasting your time with me. You are not going to get anywhere with that piece of crap with me." But Passo and Simon continued to push, and in late August Passo sent a contract with United to the Teamster legal department for approval. (Passo, in his IRB hearing, would insist that what he sent was not really a contract, but he described the emendations in his accompanying letter as "the amended language to the contract.")

Meanwhile, Simon plowed ahead, convincing a trade-show contractor to hire his workers in violation of the red book. The contractors rejected Teamster workers in favor of United's low-wage ones. Local 631 members responded by trying to inform the United workers, most of whom were Hispanic and did not speak English, that they could get better wages by registering through Local 631; but Simon's supervisors prevented their workers from talking to the Teamsters. One Teamster proposed in a union meeting that the local translate its red book into Spanish; but, according to her testimony, Passo escorted her out of the meeting.

After Simon's United Temps workers were hired at a major Las Vegas show, Wilkerson encouraged Teamster business agents to file grievances against the trade-show contractor. Wilkerson also took his own complaints about Passo to the Teamster leadership in Washington.

The Teamsters are organized like an elected monarchy. At the top are the king and chief minister—Hoffa and his executive assistant, Carlow Scalf. Beneath them are the dukes—the heads of the Joint Councils, like Hogan in the Midwest and James Santangelo in the West, who oversee the locals in their regions. And beneath them are the courtiers—special assistants like Passo who do the king's bidding.

To build support for Simon and United Temps, Hogan and Passo had gone straight to the top, appealing directly to Hoffa and Scalf. In July 2000 Passo introduced Simon to Scalf at Bally's Hotel in Las Vegas. In the middle of the summer, when Hoffa was in Chicago for a union meeting, Hogan arranged a lunch with Passo, Hoffa, Simon, and himself. (Hogan insisted in his testimony that the meeting with Simon was purely a coincidence, but Hoffa said that Hogan had invited him to lunch specifically because "there is someone I would like you to meet.") Hoffa and Scalf had discussed the United contract in these meetings but took no action to discourage Passo and Hogan from pursuing it. (The Teamster president and his assistant insist they never learned the full details of the contract with United.)

Meanwhile, in early September, Wilkerson took his complaints about Passo and Simon to Scalf and to Santangelo, the head of Joint Council 42 in the West. Scalf was unresponsive, but Santangelo was extremely sympathetic. When Wilkerson told him how upset he was about the arrangement Passo wanted to negotiate with Simon, Santangelo replied, "I don't blame you. I mean, we would be all dead. This would be crazy; you'd kill this whole industry." After his conversation with Wilkerson, Santangelo asked Stier—the former prosecutor who was heading the Teamster RISE program—to look into Simon and the agreement. According to Santangelo, Stier "told me to stay away from [Simon] and to tell the Teamsters to stay away from him." Santangelo testified that Stier told him: "the guy is not a nice guy. He's a funny guy. He's got all kinds of baggage." After that, Santangelo and four Teamster vice presidents met with Hoffa to ask that Passo—who, after all, had been negotiating with the man Stier had told the union to stay away from—be removed from Las Vegas. Hoffa dismissed the meeting as a "gripe session."

Around the same time, Stier recounted to Hoffa and Scalf the warnings he had given Santangelo. According to Scalf, Stier and Stier's assistant—a former FBI agent—said about Simon "that they had reason to believe that he was involved with some crime figures in Chicago, that he was a bad guy." Stier also warned the two men about Passo. He showed them a letter from the FBI about Passo, which, Scalf later recalled, "didn't paint a pretty picture."

These warnings from organized crime experts should have spelled the end of Hogan's and Passo's tenure as high-ranking appointees and of their efforts to reach an agreement with United. But they didn't. After the meeting with Stier, Scalf did tell Passo not to pursue the contract with Simon. But neither he nor Hoffa did anything about Hogan's connection with Simon, even though they had to have known by this time that Hogan was deeply involved with, if not actually controlling, the negotiations with United. Hoffa also took away Passo's title as special assistant, which Passo had used to suggest that he spoke for the Teamster president. But incredibly, Hoffa allowed Passo to remain

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his personal representative to Local 631. Three months later Hoffa gave Passo a raise—from $82,400 to more than $90,000 per year.

The IRB, whose mandate is internal to the Teamsters, did not call Simon to testify, but Simon says Stier's characterization of him was "false, misleading, and defaming." Simon blames Stier for the failure of the contract to go through. His company's workers, Simon says, were "disenfranchised by unsubstantiated innuendo by Mr. Stier." But Stier's charges didn't end United Temps' activities in Las Vegas.

After the September confrontation, Passo, unchastened, once again sought to change the leadership of Local 631. First he tried to elevate his own allies in the union, many of whom had come from Chicago. Wilkerson said it was "almost like" Passo was assembling a group from Chicago to "infiltrate" the union. Perhaps the most interesting of Passo's Chicago buddies was an ex-felon named Vito Locascio.

Locascio had been a member of Hogan's Local 714. He had been convicted for burglary, interstate theft, and passing bad checks. He moved to Las Vegas and joined Local 631 in 1994, and he ran Hoffa's presidential campaign there in 1996. In 1999 he had taken the lead, along with another ex-felon and Passo crony, in pressing for Murphy's ouster. According to the IRB investigation, Locascio was subsequently present at high-level meetings with Scalf and visited Hoffa in Washington. In October 2000 Passo told Wilkerson to make Locascio the head of the Teamster get-out-the-vote drive in Nevada for that fall's presidential and congressional elections, even though Locascio, as an ex-felon, could not vote. When Wilkerson balked at hiring Locascio, Passo got Scalf to order him to do so. Later, Passo would try to make Locascio a business agent for the local.

In November 2000 Passo moved against Wilkerson himself, recommending to Hoffa that he dismiss him. Even though Passo's charges appear to have been spurious and inconsequential—for instance, he charged Wilkerson with ending the practice of giving out free soda at membership meetings—Hoffa complied, and Wilkerson was fired on November 6. Hoffa replaced Wilkerson with a trustee who had no experience organizing convention workers and who, at the same time, served as the secretary-treasurer of a Centralia, Washington local—in other words, a trustee that wouldn't get in Passo and Hogan's way.

And he didn't. In early January, United workers were once again competing for Teamster jobs at the Las Vegas "Super Show," run by none other than Michael Hogan. But just when it appeared that Simon and the Hogans might finally succeed, the IRB, which Murphy had alerted after his firing in April 2000, began taking depositions in Las Vegas. And with the IRB on the scene, Hoffa and Scalf decided to close down Passo and Hogan's operation. In March of last year, when Hogan asked Hoffa and Scalf to let him negotiate Local 631's new red book agreement, which expired on May 31, Hoffa said no. Hoffa testified that he turned down Hogan "just because of the background of all the things that have happened with the IRB, I didn't think it was a good idea for him to be negotiating that contract." Hoffa's decision ended Hogan and Passo's attempt to manipulate Local 631. But not before they had done considerable damage. They had placed their interests and those of a nonunion Chicago company with past mob connections above the people they were supposed to represent—and in the process almost wrecked the union.

The IRB is not perfect. Its power to expel Teamsters simply for associating with mob figures and for refusing to testify before it has drawn the ire of civil libertarians. What's more, the board's three-member panel is not immune from politics: The old panel tarried too long before investigating former Teamster President Ron Carey's fundraising practices in the 1996 Teamster election. With Hoffa installed, the IRB raised some eyebrows last year by refusing to punish longtime Hoffa crony Larry Brennan on charges that he siphoned off union funds for his own reelection campaign. Who knows—it could even accept Passo's implausible argument that he meant well or Hogan's equally preposterous claim that he was not really involved.

But the IRB is at least independent. While Stier did his job in warning Hoffa and Scalf about Simon and United, his is still a purely advisory role. Says Herman Benson of the Association for Union Democracy, a New York-based pro-labor watchdog group, "With RISE, everything rests with Hoffa. The decisions are only recommendations. Basically, it has no power." Teamster Spokesman Caldwell claims that once the IRB is shut down, RISE will "ensure that corruption is fully eliminated from the union." But the Teamster leadership's performance in this case does not inspire confidence that it will.

The Teamsters have undoubtedly made progress since the 1980s, when mob families virtually chose their national leadership. But as the United Service episode shows, Hoffa and his cronies have not made a clean break with the past. Historically, the mob has gained a foothold in the Teamsters when union officials have pursued side deals that benefited themselves and their associates at the expense of their members. And that is exactly the culture that Hoffa allowed to reemerge in Las Vegas.

But the newfound Teamster boosters on Capitol Hill and in the White House do not seem particularly worried about that. After Representative Hoekstra assured me that the IRB's current investigations have "nothing to do with organized crime," I asked him if he was familiar with the Bane case. He said he was not. I also asked him about the IRB case against Passo and Hogan. "I am a little bit familiar with it," Hoekstra said. "I don't believe there is any implication of involvement with organized crime. It ought to go through the Teamster hierarchy. In other unions, it would have been handled itself." I didn't bother telling him that the case had "gone through the Teamster hierarchy"—and that the hierarchy had rewarded one of the key malefactors with a raise. But I did ask him what he thought about Simon and United Service. "I don't know of them," he said. So goes the Republican love affair with Hoffa's Teamsters. Like many things in Washington, it's based on willful ignorance. ■

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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Modern Mythologies

HENRY JAGLOM HAS made a tolerable film. Those who have seen some of his past work will naturally doubt this statement. His career has made me think that he was independently wealthy: it is hard to credit that any rational producer would finance Jaglom's self-display or college-dorm profundities. But **Festival in Cannes** (Rainbow) is a picture that, partly because he is not in it, sustains interest—an ultimately discomfiting interest, but it exists.

Oddly, Jaglom did it by fixing on one of the less appealing events in the film world, the festival. I have been to only four festivals in my life—Venice, Berlin, Karlovy Vary, and Telluride. (I'm not counting the many New York festivals because, for me, they don't entail moving into a short-term, high-pressure community.) Of these, Telluride was the only pleasant one, because the people there had come to see films, not to make deals or to lave stars with slush. The other occasions, some of which showed good films, were thick with deal-making or gassy with movie gush. Jaglom's picture, which was shot at the Cannes festival in 1999, plunges right into the wheeling and the dealing and the rhetorical extravagances, and, through belief in them, transforms them into comedy.

The screenplay, by Jaglom, has several strands. A maturing star, played by Greta Scacchi, now wants to direct and has come to Cannes to pitch a story idea to an even more mature star, Anouk Aimée. For reasons known only to Jaglom, Aimée is impressed by the idea; but she is also wooed by a big producer, Ron Silver, who needs her desperately for a film about to start. Also, Aimée encounters her director-husband Maximilian Schell, from whom she is estranged but of whom she is very fond, and he is interested in working with her again. There are other strands, more or less knit by a prototypical hustler, Zack Norman, but the skulduggery and smarm are chiefly evoked through the dealings above.

The film holds us first by the sparkle of its actors. It is lovely to see Aimée again: time has only made her more of a mortal. (Besides her films, I am still captivated by a television conversation I had with her in the mid-1960s. For some reason she began to talk of Groucho Marx, whom she called Groo*sho*. She interrupted herself and asked, "You say Groo*sho*, no?" I have tried to do so ever since.) Scacchi is quietly winning; Silver is vital and sharp; Schell—now that he no longer mistakes screaming for acting—is continentally engaging and very handsome in his silver beard. These people and others in Jaglom's cast move through several days of the festival, encountering in their fictional selves other actors who are there simply as themselves.

Festival in Cannes is not the first film set there: Michael Ritchie's *An Almost Perfect Affair* used the setting in 1979. But more snakily than that picture (as I recall), Jaglom has done something insidious. He gets us really wrapped up in the buzz and the backstabbing of the film world, the trumpery affection, the hyperbolic nonsense. He seems to be smirking at us once in a while, murmuring, "Don't care about Movieland, eh? Above all the gossip and chicanery, are you?" Then he chuckles as he watches us staring at his screen, slightly embarrassed communicants at the tinsel temple. Myth is what holds us there, the para-reality of the film world, a fabric of dream and sex and vivid impossibility that, almost independently of films themselves, has embraced our world for a century.

Jaglom's implications of the power of myth led me back to a book published last year, overdue for mention—**Silent Film and the Triumph of the American Myth** by Paula Marantz Cohen (Oxford University Press, 224 pp., $19.95 paper). Cohen, who teaches at Drexel University, is less concerned with oneiric myth than with historical mythology, but she sees the idea of film as a province of exaltation—of the reification of intangible ideas. Much of her stimulating book deals with a conjunction in American history, the arrival of film around 1900 just at the right time for a vibrant national mythology to find its perfect medium: "The alliance between film and America was the result of more than economic opportunity and available human and natural resources.... It rested on film's ability to participate in the *myth of America* as it was elaborated in the course of the nineteenth century." Cohen traces that mythology from Crèvecoeur and Jefferson through Tocqueville and Whitman, and posits a strong case for a marriage arranged in historical heaven between this mythology and film.

One of Cohen's most striking insights relates to the subject of motion itself. Popular fascination with photography, she reminds us, had been immediate and sweeping. But she maintains that the arrival of movement in pictures altered the status of the viewer. She sees the advent of motion as affecting what might be called the demotics of photography. "With the advent of moving pictures, the democratic transfer of power from artist to spectator was radically intensified. [Movement] produced the sense that reality was being not only recorded but also enacted, and it solidified and deepened the spectator's role as the focus and determinant of meaning." This view carries weight when we remember how proprietary we are about the films we like and dislike. All art that affects us becomes personal to us, but films often seem more private possessions than other arts, more secret, more at our disposition and disposal.

Throughout her book Cohen traces ideas that grow from the American aptness of film to its global effect. "These films' ability to dramatically represent and disseminate that myth affected not just Americans but people everywhere, including America's progenitors and rivals." Almost as proof of this, she begins and ends with instances from British royalty. She opens with a photograph of four people in a prankish pose—Douglas Fairbanks with Mary Pickford on his shoulders, and next to them Lord Mountbatten with Lady Mountbatten on his shoulders, the second pair relying on the balance of the film stars. Of this photo Cohen says that the stars "dominate the photograph because their movies gave their looks a context that they carried with them wherever they went.... To see the English aristocrats made pasty seconds to the American movie stars is to see a graphic enactment of the shift in power from Europe to America." Our initial reaction is to sweep this comment aside as overstatement, but the sweep is soon bridled by our own experience—of Jaglom's film, for instance.

The book closes with an epilogue about Princess Diana. Cohen compares the emotional torrent at her death with the torrent when Rudolph Valentino died seventy years earlier, because Diana had "adopted

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an entire way of being that American movie stars had helped to define and popularize." Again our initial impulse to disagree soon falters. At least and at last this is a credible explanation of the tidal Diana-mourning. And for this explanation, we can note, Cohen abandons the historical myth for what we might call the Cannes-festival myth.

Postscript. Not much irony still clings to the latter-day tourism of twentieth-century battlefields, yet the March 11 *New Yorker* delivered a small jolt. In the column next to David Denby's review of *We Were Soldiers*, about a bloody battle in the Vietnam War, was a Singapore Airlines ad featuring a "Vietnam Spectacular" tour. ■

Jed Perl on Art

Saint Gerhard of the Sorrows of Painting

GERHARD RICHTER IS a bullshit artist masquerading as a painter. His retrospective, at the **Museum of Modern Art** until May, is a colossal bummer—a hymn to deracination, a visual moan. This seventy-year-old artist works in paint on canvas, but what he sends out into the world are not paintings so much as they are Neo-Dadaist puzzles engineered to inspire philosophical flights of fancy among art professionals who are more interested in massaging their world-weary minds than in using their jet-lagged eyes. The Modern, that inner sanctum of art-world officialdom, has gone all out for Richter, bringing together some one hundred eighty-eight canvases that span forty years, so that museumgoers can see how he has packaged and repackaged his hold-everything-at-a-distance pose, serving up both realist and abstract images, both blurred gray photorealist scenes and coarsely colored rehashes of Abstract Expressionist brushwork. Robert Storr, the senior curator in the department of painting and sculpture who organized this show, will tell you that there is beauty in this chilly stuff, but all I see in Richter and his supporters is a loathing for painting's hellbent magic.

Everything in Richter's work is muffled, distanced, impassively ironic, as if it were being seen through a thick, murky sheet of glass. What some observers regard as the signs of hope that Richter sprinkles through his work—a photorealist image of a candle, or a blurry rendering of his young son—are witheringly calculated, like stills from an avant-garde soap opera in which the feelings are overcooked and bland. This vast show is an experience, all right: an experience of visual deprivation. At the Museum of Modern Art, Richter is presented as the painter-who-kept-painting-in-spite-of-the-death-of-painting; and to an art world that was once brainwashed into believing that painting was dead, he represents the newer painting-is-not-dead form of brainwashing. He plays the role of Saint Gerhard of the Sorrows of Painting. And a weird ennui, a kind of shared psychosis, hovers in the gallery air.

The exhibition begins with gray canvases done from photographs in the mid-1960s, after Richter, who was born and studied art in East Germany, moved to the West. Storr makes much of this linkage between Richter's coming-of-age in wartime and postwar Germany and those woozy monochromatic images of smiling relatives and humdrum household objects and figures in news photos, as if the dispiriting times in which an artist lives justify the creation of inert art. In his catalogue essay, Storr brings a honey-toned portentousness to a text that covers some seventy-five tightly packed pages. He is writing the life of the saint. The art world is Richter's wilderness. The mood is deprivation chic. "Transposing the frozen action of the photograph into the enduring but temporally ambiguous realm of painting," Storr explains, "Richter fastened on the emblems and ephemera of postwar life and distilled their often bitter essence in tonal pictures whose poetry is a combination of matter-of-fact watchfulness and unrelieved uncertainty." This sounds augustly metaphysical, but what Storr's distillations and "uncertainty" actually

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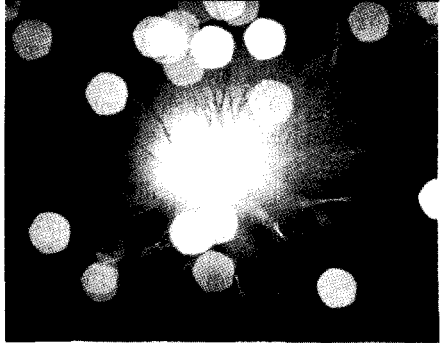

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amount to are Richter's chilly moods. Gray can be one of the greatest weapons in a painter's arsenal, of course, *if* the restrained hues are mixed from rich colors so that they have fiery undercurrents, or *if* they are spaced and proportioned to create a visual music. But gray is just a logo for Richter—an advertisement for the tedium of postwar existence.

Richter presents his murky images with the certainty of scientific proofs. These paintings have a technological veneer. They are handmade objects with a weirdly mechanized gleam. And this effect turns Richter's canvases into the ultimate buyables for hip collectors who want something that fits right in with their electronic gadgetry and sparely expensive décor. The curators, the dealers, the collectors, the critics, and the artists who admire Richter's work—and they are legion—believe that he is showing them how we live now, as sensitive sad sacks in a manicured minimalist bubble. And of course the fact that Richter is German is supposed to guarantee the authenticity of his experience.

Although this show has been accompanied by mea culpas to the effect that we Americans are too slow to recognize new European art, the truth is that Richter is only the most recent in a series of European artists, and especially German artists, who have received a kind of manic adulation in the States; they include Joseph Beuys, Anselm Kiefer, Georg Baselitz, Sigmar Polke, and the photographer Andreas Gursky, who was the subject of a show at the Modern last season. For an audience whose attitude toward the very idea of art is one of fashionable doubt, an artist who can associate himself with the calamitous history of Germany takes on an extra-artistic importance. Richter has no interest in the visual histrionics that Kiefer once used to bulk up his shallow thoughts about the War and the Leader and the Homeland; but Richter's more restrained and veiled approach to German history is perfect now, when there seems to be some embarrassment about the lunatic fervor with which people fell all over themselves in praise of Kiefer a decade ago.

There is an analytical chill to Richter's work: if Kiefer was phony Wagner, Richter is phony Kafka. One of Richter's quixotic remarks (they come by the truckload) goes like this: "The picture [I guess he is referring to photography] is the depiction, and painting is the technique for shattering it." That little nugget takes you to the core of Richter's blandly nihilistic attitude. It is difficult to be impressed by all this talk about painting's being a destructive force, since the talk is being done by an artist who demonstrates no ability to construct a painting in the first place. Richter never escapes from the wanly monochromatic atmosphere of the paintings in those early galleries at the Modern, even when he is using raucous color in some of the abstractions done in more recent years. Color in Richter's work, red and green or black and white, has no contrapuntal effect. There is no sense of how a particular amount of color creates an emotional impact. The sizes of the paintings are arbitrary, and the color is all localized and trivialized, dispiritingly descriptive in most of the realist paintings and blandly emblematic in some of the abstract ones.

COURTESY MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Gerhard Richter, *Toilet Paper*, 1965

There is much talk about the range of Richter's work. He does paintings after news photographs and family snapshots, he does landscapes and seascapes and still lifes, he does abstractions with bold brushwork and others with viscous rivulets of paint. Yet everything that Richter paints brings us back to the same tepid, tamped-down vision. Each image looks as if it were excerpted from some vast, undifferentiated stock of images. In fact Richter owns such a collection of images, a compendium of snapshots and pictures taken from newspapers and magazines that he calls his *Atlas*; it was exhibited at the Dia Center in 1995. And Richter's compositions have the perfunctoriness of clippings. Where an image begins or ends is utterly arbitrary. And his brushwork—which is all trickery and gimmickry—never serves to structure the space.

You may wonder how Richter achieves those blurry, smudged effects in the photorealist works, or those layers of rumpled paint in the abstract ones. This is idle curiosity. Technique is just a form of visual static that disrupts—and confers a false importance upon—banal images. One of the motifs in the early part of the show is a roll of toilet paper. This inspires Storr to muse, in an interview with Richter: "What happens when the subject is not Titian but a toilet paper roll?" (Richter has taken an interest in an *Annunciation* by the Venetian master.) The talk that Richter's work inspires can sound like a skit on *Saturday Night Live*, except that nobody is laughing.

The Museum of Modern Art does not give living artists retrospectives so much as it gives them sainthood, and Storr has done such a thorough job on Richter's behalf that even a skeptic would say that there is a weird fascination in the proceedings. There is a kind of diabolical logic to Storr's writing, so that anything that has ever been said about Richter's paintings, positive or negative, becomes a form of praise. Argue that his work is boring, and Storr explains that this is a beautiful boredom. Describe his work as anti-painting, and your comment becomes a way of insisting on the importance of the work as painting.

Richter's "contribution to the medium," Storr acknowledges, has been described as that of a "lethal parodist, dour undertaker, dry-eyed mourner, systematic debunker of clichés, demystifying conjurer of illusions, or as tenacious seeker of ways to make visible the longing and queasy uncertainty inherent in our hunger for pictures." Yet through it all Richter has, "paradoxically or stealthily, demonstrated painting's resiliency." Richter, Storr writes, believes that painting can be "'everything' shadowed by the fear of 'nothing.'" He "has managed to straddle the divide between conceptual and perceptual art," not by "hedging his bets" but by "bridging the gap." Storr's catalogue essay is written with the intricate twists and turns of the expert courtier. The reader is lulled into believing that the entire history of art in the past fifty years flows straight into these stupefyingly lifeless paintings.

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I DO NOT dislike one or another of Gerhard Richter's paintings. I reject the work on fundamental grounds, as a matter of principle. I do not accept the premise on which his entire career is based: that in the past half-century painting has become essentially and irreversibly problematical, a medium in a condition of perpetual crisis. This is a counterfeit crisis, as far as I am concerned. This crisis is the invention of cynical marketers who, disguised as fashion-conscious nihilists, have managed to bulk up the essentially marginal figure of Duchamp until he overshadows Matisse, Mondrian, and all the hard-working makers and finders of the century just passed. Although he is quick to express his reservations about Duchamp, Richter would be nowhere without the Dadaist deity telling us that art has failed. Remove the phony crisis, remove the aura of oh-so-elegiac loss, and Richter's work dissolves right before your eyes.

The fundamentally unanalyzed fact of Richter's career is his slavish dependency on photographic images. We would do well to remember that only four years ago Robert Storr organized at the Modern a retrospective of Chuck Close, another contemporary artist whose career is grounded in a slavish dependency on photographic images. These are not artists who from time to time take an interest in the particular qualities of certain photographic images, or who find compositional or structural ideas in photographs that intrigue them and that they think of bringing into their work as painters. They cling to the two-dimensional images that the camera produces in order to concoct their own two-dimensional painted images. True, many of Richter's abstract paintings are done without reference to photographs. But even in these cases he reaches for the smoothed-out glossiness of a color xerox, and in other cases, the abstractions are based on photographs—some seem to be painted replicas of photographs of abstract brushwork. I think Richter wants all his non-objective images to have the melancholy feeling that adheres to coarse reproductions of Abstract Expressionist classics.

Basically, Richter and Close have ceded the act of creation to the camera. After which they dither around with notions of facture and style—they give their photographic material a personalized "artistic" spin. Yet there is always a deadness to this work: the deadness of their dependency on the photograph, of their inability to make anything on their own. They want us to believe that that deadness is a form of hipness.

Richter and Close are far from being the only contemporary artists who are hard-pressed to respond to nature if they do not have a camera to do the looking for them. Countless academic portrait painters, who will never garner any attention at the Museum of Modern Art, depend on photographs when they do their work; and they are dismissed as sentimental hacks. With Richter and Close, however, photorealism has an avant-gardist éclat, as if their own inability to reconstruct the world could be blamed on modern art, which has left them photo-dependent. Richter spouts banalities about photography's taking on "a religious function. Everyone has produced his own 'devotional pictures.'" And Storr trots out the old cliché about "photography's historical usurpation of painting's function of representing reality," as if great painters had not been working directly from nature straight through the twentieth century. There is no crisis in the artist's relationship with reality.

A few days after the Richter show opened I was in London, where the big event at Tate Modern is a Warhol retrospective. I do not regard Warhol as a great artist, but at least his early Marilyns and Lizes, which come out of the same years as the first works in the Richter show, have a funny punch. For a time in the early 1960s, Warhol was using the silkscreen process and his overheated color sense to give photographic images a boisterous graphic impact. After that, his work is nothing at all; but what really bothered me in London was not the assembly-line vacuity of the paintings that filled the gloomy halls of Tate Modern so much as the many groups of school-age kids who were being shepherded through the show. There are by now several generations of museumgoers who have been trained to regard photo-dependency as a fact of artistic life. And they may ultimately be unable to understand that the act of creation can be a genuinely independent act. They may find themselves going through the Richter retrospective at the Modern—or at museums in Chicago, San Francisco, and Washington, where the show is headed in the coming year—and feeling an emptiness in the work, but they will have no way of understanding this emptiness, since they have been taught to believe that there is no alternative to this photo-derived junk.

GERHARD RICHTER IS a post-Duchampian message artist. The curators and the critics who embrace his work are the same ones who long ago accepted the most visually and intellectually impoverished forms of Minimal and Conceptual art as key late-twentieth-century achievements. They may still like that stuff, or at least they say that they like it, but art professionals know instinc-

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tively that the end-of-art pose may eventually threaten their very livelihoods. That's where Richter comes in. He is one of a number of artists who can get the art world beyond the nihilistic poses while aggrandizing the endgame attitudes. Richter is presented as the way out of our troubles, and it is truly extraordinary how many people are eager to climb on the bandwagon. Weeks before the show opened, *The New York Times Magazine* ran a huge profile of Richter by Michael Kimmelman, the paper's chief art critic, and when the work was up Kimmelman was at it again, praising Richter for maintaining "a kind of cruel faith" in painting.

There is something cruel about the Richter retrospective: it is cruel to see what it does to painting. Richter's work is preachy in a dry, quixotic way that many people mistake for seriousness incarnate. In place of structural dynamics, he offers mingy technical precision; the work has the cool fussiness of a lesson plan. I am reminded that Richter went to art school in East Germany at a time when Socialist Realism was still the order of the day, and in his twenties he actually did some murals of the Happy Worker variety. Half a century later Richter is still preaching to the converted, only to a different congregation. Everything he has done since coming to the West remains polemical, in a kind of après-postmodernism, art-is-over-long-live-art way. He gives a Socialist Realist rigidity to postmodernism's most cherished hopes and dreams. The work has a get-with-the-program sullenness.

That Richter does both representational and abstract paintings, and does them sometimes more or less simultaneously, may strike some people as a heartfelt response to the sense of multiplying possibilities of modern art. There is, after all, an inherent unity between representation and abstraction, and this may turn out to be the essential discovery of twentieth-century art, a discovery that is lodged deep in the achievements of Picasso, Matisse, and Klee. But Richter makes a mockery of this unity. His abstract and realist works may hang in close proximity, but they are locked in an intellectual face-off, as disconnected from one another as they are from any meaningful sense of structure, of paint quality, of metaphor, of poetry. He gives the giddy possibilities of modern art a hectoring, polemical presentation.

Richter gives us nothing to look at, but the chatter that swarms around his work is full of brain crushers. In the early 1970s Richter created *48 Portraits*, a series of black-and-white photorealist renderings of the faces of modern worthies, ranging from Einstein to Stravinsky to Dos Passos to Hindemith. (It also includes artists who seem to have wandered into the twentieth century by accident, such as Puccini.) *48 Portraits*, which hangs above a stairway at the Modern, may well be the most visually inert set of canvases ever displayed in this museum. That will seem like a criticism, until you read what Richter says about *48 Portraits*: "Those were the typical neutral pictures that one finds in an encyclopedia," he explains to Storr. "The issue of neutrality was my wish and main concern. And that's what they were. That made them modern and absolutely contemporary."

When I look at a photograph of a modern artist whom I admire, such as Stravinsky, I do not find it neutral at all. I am excited by what I can learn about a person from a photograph. And I believe others are too. So why does anybody accept Richter's neutralist bilge? The only thing that I find more depressing than this charlatan is the passivity of the museum-goers who pass before his works: they may have an inkling that they are being had, but they are unable to trust the evidence of their eyes.

These paintings do not give off anything, but they are manipulative to a truly extraordinary degree. They hang there on the wall and insist on your making something of them. At times Richter wants us to make something out of nothing, as in the *Color Charts*, vast paintings dating from the 1960s and 1970s in which each rectangle is filled in with something like a commercial color mixture. (Even Storr doesn't know what to say.) At other times Richter aims to produce an intellectual chowdown. A prime example here is *October 18, 1977*, a series of fifteen black-and-white paintings from 1988 based on photographs and video footage related to the story of the Baader-Meinhof gang. This series, in which scenes from the misadventures of the legendary leftist group are given a grainy black-and-white elegance, are a dictionary definition of radical chic. As art, they are numb. As conversation starters, they are just the thing. You can wonder if several prison deaths were suicides, as the official accounts had it, or something else. You can wonder at what the murderous activities of these radicals tell you about German society. Storr has already devoted an exhibition and a book to these works; they are in the Modern's permanent collection.

Storr believes that these silly paintings reflect Richter's complicated political vision, as a man who has rejected the ideological extremism of communism (hasn't everybody?) but is also skeptical about the liberal society of West Germany. Storr looks at Richter's pallid exercises in political noir and thinks what he imagines are big, subtle thoughts. Richter makes him realize that "truth is fragmentary, that its enemy—ideology—is ultimately murderous, and that history is irremediable and, for the most part, irretrievable." Maybe what Storr and Richter are really saying is that the appropriate photographer was not at the scene.

There is a kind of self-help, twelve-step-program atmosphere around the Richter retrospective. From room to room, Richter confronts hard truths, and grows as a man and as an artist. Having begun with tough love, he is now said to have become a poet of an old-fashioned sort of romantic love. There is a Hallmark-card sentimentality about the excitement with which critics are saluting the recent portraits of his youthful wife and his young son, both of whom he paints in a soft-focus, dime-store-Vermeer style that is apparently easily mistaken for the real thing. The sourpuss conceptualist has matured into a Wordsworthian elder. Storr sees in Richter's paintings of his young son "an elusive mix of fascination, bemusement, and uneasiness, which is an adult manifestation of the devoted, puzzled, and wary gaze a child might direct at its parents." The vacuum-packed tenderheartedness of these recent works is seen as Richter's apotheosis; but the apotheosis turns out to be just another photo-op.

A LITTLE OVER twenty years ago, Richter and Warhol, these two artists who are currently the subjects of enormous retrospectives in New York and London, were among some three

Vanity

Vallone, August 19, 1917

Suddenly
the lucid
awesome
vastness
is high
above the rubble

And the man
bent
over the sun-
shocked
water
finds
he's a shadow

Rocked and
gently
broken

Giuseppe Ungaretti

—translated by Andrew Frisardi

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dozen artists included in an exhibition called "A New Spirit in Painting" at the Royal Academy in London. The show, which mingled the work of several generations, was hailed by Christos M. Joachimides, one of the curators, as telling the world that "the artists' studios are full of paint pots again and an abandoned easel in an art school has become a rare sight." "A New Spirit in Painting" featured the work of Neoexpressionists such as Schnabel, Baselitz, and Kiefer, and of harder-to-categorize artists such as Balthus, Kitaj, Auerbach, Freud, Twombly, and Hélion, as well as established modern masters such as de Kooning and Picasso.

The London show generated a good deal of excitement, in part because it presented a broader range of work than you might normally expect from a trendsetting exhibition. But in the twenty years since 1981 there can be little doubt that the artists who have received the most attention are the ones who always remained open to the possibility that the paint pots might again be empty and that the easels might again be abandoned. True, Freud has had a phenomenal success, and Twombly has enjoyed a retrospective at the Modern. But among the representational painters included in "A New Spirit in Painting" who felt no need to slavishly mimic photographs, three who have had retrospectives in New York—Balthus, Freud, and Kitaj—have had those shows not at the Modern but at the Metropolitan. My point is not that Robert Storr and his colleagues at the Museum of Modern Art prefer certain artists while some of us prefer others. My point is that there is an ideology to their preferences, an ideology that is determined to deny the freedom that is inherent in the very act of painting.

As it happens, just a few days after the Richter show opened at the Modern to a round of thunderous applause, Balthus's last two figure paintings went on display at C&M Arts in Manhattan. (They will be there until sometime in April.) This extraordinary event has provoked barely a flicker of publicity, and yet these two canvases, done by one of the twentieth century's greatest artists when he was in his early nineties, instantaneously overshadow everything about the appalling Richter retrospective.

A Midsummer Night's Dream, completed in 2000 and first exhibited at the National Gallery in London, is a moonlit vision of a girl asleep in a rocky landscape. Painted with the delicate, flickering hand of a very old man, this dusky reverie, in purples and greens and golds, has already taken its place (at least in my judgment) among the Venuses and the nymphs and the enigmatic lovers of Titian, Correggio, Rubens, and Watteau. The second, unfinished composition shows a girl reclining on a daybed in a room where Balthus's final cat dreams a final dream while a dog lifts its head to a window and looks out at a mountainous landscape in which every curve echoes the young woman's angular body. Taken together, these two works show us the world that Balthus was conquering at the time of his death, a world in which the figures have a new kind of rococo attenuation and the jewel-like richness of the color is sometimes given a muffled padding of chiaroscuro. There can be no question that Balthus needed more time to bring the second painting, here called *The Waiting*, to the perfected state of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. But *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, all by itself, constitutes one of the greatest gallerygoing experiences that New York has ever offered.

In London, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* found virtually no admirers. In New York, C&M Arts has been host to a small following of fanatical artists, but they are the fringe. I am sad about this, but I am not surprised. In an art world in which people are trained to admire Richter's techno-chic impersonality and Warhol's ghoulish exuberance, the painterly riskiness of Balthus's technique is going to be incomprehensible. And for anybody who is open to the experience of Balthus's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the whole argument about the end of painting, the argument on which Richter

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has been feeding for forty years, is immediately reduced to a howling absurdity.

THE GERHARD RICHTER retrospective is the Museum of Modern Art's current definition of what matters in contemporary art. Of course no single exhibition can be said to define a museum's viewpoint, but considering the enormous size of this retrospective, and the fact that it is the second show that the Modern has devoted to Richter in recent years, and the critical position that Storr currently holds at the museum, there is reason to believe that we are in the presence of a signal event. The Richter retrospective is also one of the last shows that we are going to see in the museum's current quarters, which will close in May, at which point the museum will move its operations to Long Island City so that a vast expansion program that is slated to be completed in 2005 can go forward on West 53rd Street.

Thus the Richter exhibition takes on a Janus-faced aspect. We see the people who are in charge at the museum laying their bets on what has mattered in the past forty years, even as they suggest what will be remembered in the years to come. And what have they come up with? This painting without savor, without warmth, without life. The Museum of Modern Art used to be accused of developing and promoting a one-track way of thinking about twentieth-century art. This approach, which emphasized the logical development of a modern language of form, had a visionary power that museumgoers could accept as the whole truth or as some part of the truth, but in either case this vision gave the museum its fascination—and certainly its integrity. In recent years, however, that vision has eroded until it is unrecognizable, and by now all that the powers that be at the Museum of Modern Art want to do is blend in with whatever is happening in the art world at large. The Modern, for all its unrivaled collections and international clout, has become a wanna-be institution. The Richter retrospective is one more grim reminder that this museum that once led taste now only follows.

The Museum of Modern Art now imagines that the way to succeed is to join in and go along, so it accepts the standard-issue international art stars and whatever incoherent catch-as-catch-can view of the history of twentieth-century art will give that work its shaky legitimacy. This is the kind of tactical thinking that lay behind "MoMA2000," the recent overview of the museum's collections, which offered a variety of anti-chronological and non-chronological and thematic approaches, and was conceptually indistinguishable from the theoretical caprices that have turned so many European surveys of modern art into forgettable sideshows. It was during "MoMA2000" that I began to hear artists saying that they felt increasingly dispirited about the very prospect of going to the museum.

Critics of the Museum of Modern Art receive a standard response, which is that the museum has always had its critics, and that the biggest game in town is always going to take some big hits. Yet the entire question of content may be increasingly irrelevant at the Modern. The museum's attention has shifted from the development of a truly loyal public to the brute dollars-and-cents questions involved in figuring out how to get enough people through the doors to meet revenue goals and to satisfy the public and private funders who are supporting a vast expansion plan. There can be little doubt that, despite the downturn in museum attendance since September 11, the Modern will in the long run bring in the crowds. Richter is said to be a hit. And the museum has a blockbuster, "Matisse/Picasso," scheduled for Long Island City in 2003.

Yet when it comes to the issues that once animated this museum—how tradition relates to innovation and how both relate to the experience of the eye—there is a small but growing number of museumgoers who see the Modern as an institution that has not only lost its way but also lost its mind. No retrospective in recent years has had the inviolable lucidity of the great shows that William Rubin once organized. And nothing that the museum has done about contemporary art in recent years has really been daring or engaged: it has all been art-world business as usual. When I consider what has been going on at the museum and then realize that Richter's parched vision is what the museum is offering as its temporary farewell to West 53rd Street, I cannot help but wonder whether the Museum of Modern Art will ever again be capable of properly presenting the great feast of twentieth-century art that it once set before the people of New York City and the world. ■

Capital Crimes

By RICHARD A. POSNER

The Death Penalty: An American History by Stuart Banner

(Harvard University Press, 385 pp., $29.95)

A THREE-HUNDRED-YEAR history of capital punishment in the United States is not that easy to read all the way to the end. A narrative of executions not only has a cumulative effect that is depressing, but it becomes less fascinating when it reaches modern times and so recounts a history that is already familiar. Still, Stuart Banner's book is fine and balanced and important. His lucid history of this grim subject is scrupulously accurate, so far as I am able to judge (I am not a historian, but I am professionally familiar with the modern practice of capital punishment). It is refreshingly free of the tendentiousness and the sensationalism that this subject invites.

The history of capital punishment in this country has had three phases. The first, comprising the colonial era and the first few years of the new nation, was one of widespread and unquestioned use of capital punishment for major crimes, not limited to murder. This was followed by a long period of declining use of capital punishment, culminating in 1972 when the Supreme Court invalidated every existing death-penalty law, at the federal level and at the state level, in the case of *Furman* v. *Georgia*. The third phase began immediately, with an upsurge of popular support for capital punishment, a re-enactment of death-penalty statutes designed to meet the lack of standards for the imposition of the death penalty that had bothered the Court, and a rising tide of death sentences that were carried out after unprecedentedly protracted litigation.

Explaining this history is the primary challenge for the historian. The first two phases, which for brevity's sake I will call "colonial" and "reform," and the transition between them, seem fairly comprehensible. Colonial America, like the mother country, did not have prisons (though it

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had jails to hold persons awaiting trial or convicted persons awaiting execution), galleys, or other non-lethal means of punishing serious crimes. It probably lacked the administrative infrastructure, and possibly also the economic resources, for a prison system. Hanging, the standard method of capital punishment, was an extremely cheap alternative to prison. There were no police forces either, so that satisfactory deterrence could be achieved only by imposing a severe punishment on those who were caught ("counterbalancing Temptation by Terror," as one contemporary put it), rather than by creating a high probability that criminals would be caught. Hangings were public, in a conscious effort to increase their deterrent effect; and some attracted thousands of spectators. A religiously motivated belief in free will, and in the effect of sincere repentance on one's afterlife prospects, enhanced the public acceptability of capital punishment.

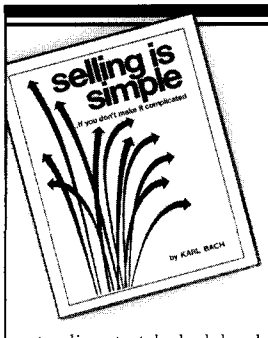
The imposition of a uniformly severe penalty for crimes and criminals of varying depravity was a widely perceived disadvantage of a death-centered criminal justice system, but it was mitigated by the frequent exercise of executive clemency. As many as half of those sentenced to death were pardoned, including valuable slaves whose lives were spared at the request of their owners. Capital punishment, and the correlative institution of executive clemency, served the further purpose, in an era when government was weak, of exhibiting government power in a dramatic form.

This system seems bizarre to the modern eye: Banner gives many colorful anecdotes, such as the story of the condemned man who after conviction sold his body to science for delivery upon his death and used the proceeds of the sale to feed himself in jail on gourmet food while awaiting execution. It seemed bizarre even to some contemporaries, and by the end of the eighteenth century it was regarded as completely unsatisfactory. Juries were reluctant to convict of capital crimes other than murder, feeling that the punishment was disproportionate to the crime. The search for intermediate punishments in this pre-prison era led to weird expedients such as simulated hanging, in which the "condemned" stood on the gallows for an hour with the noose around his neck, and was then released. The widespread but standardless exercise of executive clemency made the imposition of the death penalty unpredictable and eventually quite rare, so that deterrence was compromised, while the summary nature of criminal proceedings—the absence of counsel, and of appellate review—made the risk of erroneous conviction substantial, and so clemency became a method of appellate review as well as an occasion for the exercise of mercy.

Enlightenment ideas undermined the old-time religion. Increasingly criminals were regarded as sick rather than evil, and prisons, increasingly seen as affordable, were touted as institutions for rehabilitation as well as punishment. Public executions, which were often rowdy events attracting drunkards and women, came to be thought vulgar by the elite; yet the public character of these events, remember, had been a key component of the perceived deterrent efficacy of execution. Hangings, intended as painless, were frequently botched. Some hanged persons apparently survived and were spirited away by complicit doctors, who revived them and sent them on their way.

I WAS SURPRISED to discover from Banner's book that early in the nineteenth century a movement to abolish capital punishment was in high gear, powered by the same humanitarian impulses of the era that gave rise to laws against cockfights and other forms of cruelty to animals, but also by a belief that prisons provided on the whole a more effective system for preventing murder and other capital crimes. Prison did not punish less, but it punished better, as the saying went. The abolition movement never achieved its full objective—though beginning in 1846 with Michigan about one-third of the states eventually did abolish capital punishment; but soon public executions, and executions for crimes other than murder, pretty much ceased to occur. (Still, one of the many curious facts that one learns from Banner's book is that the last public execution in the United States took place as recently as 1936.) The principal exception to the "decapitalization" of lesser crimes was the retention of capital punishment for a wide range of crimes committed by slaves and free blacks in the South, after whites were punishable by death only for murder. Well into the twentieth century, capital punishment, along with lynchings (which actually outnumbered legal executions), was a method of intimidating black people in the South.

The replacement of hanging by the electric chair (and later in a few states by the gas chamber), touted as foolproof and painless, slowed but did not stop a gradual movement away from capital punishment, though the movement was briefly reversed after the United States entered World War I. The history of the electric chair, by the way, is a cornucopia of curious facts, beginning with the word "electrocution" itself, which turns out to be a fusion of "electric" with "execution." The



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early history got entangled with the fight between advocates of alternating current and direct current. Thomas Edison, the leader of the direct-current school, designed the first electric chair, and he designed it to operate on alternating current, for he hoped to discredit alternating current by associating it with death. The Westinghouse Company, the sponsor of alternating current, surreptitiously financed the defense of the first person to be sentenced to death in the electric chair (who challenged it unsuccessfully as a form of cruel and unusual punishment), fearing that Edison was right and that electrocuting people would give alternating current a bad name.

THE ABOLITIONIST MOVEMENT was bolstered in the twentieth century by a series of highly controversial executions, such as those of Sacco and Vanzetti and the Rosenbergs, and by the progressive abolition of capital punishment by the European countries. But probably the largest factor was simply a declining murder rate, especially after Prohibition was repealed. People were less frightened of murder, and of crime generally, and so they were more willing to accept the arguments of criminologists that life imprisonment (or even a shorter term of imprisonment) was an adequate substitute. By the 1960s, moreover, executions had become so rare (there were only seven in the entire country in 1965) that they seemed random events unrelated to any coherent penal policy. A murderer was not much more likely to be executed than to die of natural causes while awaiting sentencing.

The Supreme Court's decision in *Furman* invalidating the existing death-penalty laws, on the ground that the erratic administration of such laws constituted cruel and unusual punishment, might thus have seemed simply the culmination of the long era of reform. But it was not so regarded. Why the reaction to the decision was so sharp, so negative, and so efficacious is a great mystery that Banner (it is not his fault) cannot illuminate. The decision galvanized the supporters of capital punishment in much the same way that *Roe* v. *Wade* a year later galvanized the opponents of abortion, but with far different effects. The opponents of abortion were, and are, a minority of the population; but the supporters of capital punishment, a bare majority when the Court's decision invalidating the existing statutes was issued, soon swelled to some two-thirds of the entire population, and it has remained at approximately that level to this day.

Although there is no conclusive evidence that capital punishment has an incremental deterrent effect (though I think the weight of the evidence, as well as common sense, suggests that it does), this has turned out to be politically irrelevant. The support for capital punishment is based primarily on retributive motives, or more bluntly on notions of vengeance, or simply on hatred of criminals and crime, and on the discrediting of "progressive," therapeutic approaches to crime that are associated in the public mind with the increase in the crime rate that began in the 1960s. We are not so far from the eighteenth century as we may have thought we were, when execution could be compared to "the cutting of a Wart or a Wen from the Body."

Yet support for capital punishment is not just an American phenomenon, and so it cannot be confidently referred to distinctive features of our culture, like the high level of religiosity in this country compared to Western Europe. Most Europeans support capital punishment, too—and Banner argues that the reason we have it and they do not is simply that the United States is more democratic. Banner wisely does not attempt to decide who is "right" in the continuing debate over capital punishment. Speaking for myself, the arguments for capital punishment of murderers not otherwise deterrable, such as persons already in prison for life who kill a guard or a fellow prisoner; of persons who commit murders of unusual cruelty or heinousness; of serial killers and other mass murderers; and of persons guilty of genocide—these arguments seem compelling to me, but I could not prove them to the satisfaction of people who oppose capital punishment on moral, political, or expedient grounds. There are too many intangibles, and too much emotion, involved in this issue. The opponents of capital punishment argue from different premises about human nature, justice, and so forth, just as they did in the eighteenth century; and there are no intellectual resources for bridging the gap.

Banner is doubtless right that if we learn that since the re-imposition of the death penalty in the late 1970s innocent people have been executed, the popularity of the punishment will plummet. Few of us today will be satisfied by Bishop Paley's suggestion that an innocent person awaiting execution should console himself with the thought that he is like a soldier killed in defense of his country, the occasional execution of an innocent being the price that must be paid for the maintenance of the socially valuable institution of capital punishment. We are no longer as tough-minded as that; but, for now at least, the nation seems committed to the institution. ■

The Nose and the Asp

By INGRID D. ROWLAND

Cleopatra of Egypt: From History to Myth edited by Susan Walker and Peter Higgs

(Princeton University Press, 384 pp., $60)

WHEN THE conquering Roman general Octavian (soon to be called Augustus) arrived in Egypt in 30 B.C.E., he is said to have gone immediately to visit the tomb of Alexander the Great. Asked by his Egyptian guides whether he would also like to see the tombs of the Ptolemies, the Macedonian dynasts who succeeded Alexander, the Roman victor replied: "I came to see a king, not dead bodies."

Octavian had also come to see a queen. He hoped to bring her back to Rome as a glittering prisoner of war, to parade her in chains as the supreme prize of his triumphal procession, amid vast hoards of Egyptian booty and swarms of captives, a spectacle to be exceeded only by himself, fully armed in his gilt chariot, face and hands smeared with blood-red ocher according to ancient Etruscan ritual. In Cleopatra VII, however, the Roman conqueror met his equal, at least for proud independence and clear-eyed ruthlessness.

The last of the Ptolemies, Cleopatra was also the first of that Macedonian house to have learned Egyptian, one of seven languages that she spoke fluently (including Greek, Latin, and, as Plutarch

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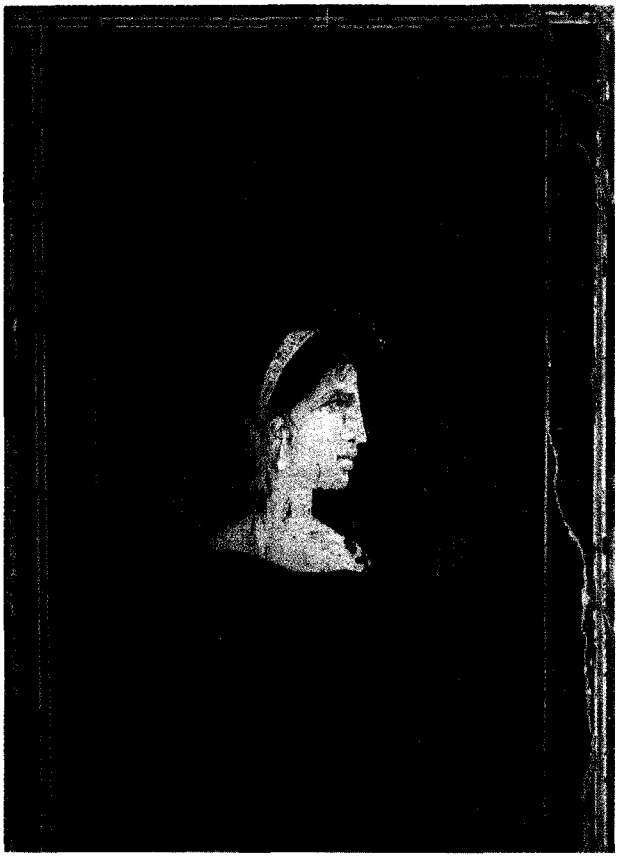
reports, Troglodyte). She comported herself like an ancient pharaoh, as haughty as those living gods had ever been—she styled herself as the New Isis—and just as divinely desirable. Two other Roman generals, Julius Caesar and Marc Antony, had quickly become her lovers. When this fierce young Italian resisted the same opportunity, she killed herself by smuggling an asp into her chambers—and Octavian took Egypt for himself.

This living Isis is the Cleopatra who was evoked in a recent exhibition mounted by the British Museum in London and the Fondazione Memmo in Rome and elaborated in this dense, lavishly illustrated, informative volume: a shrewd, calculating politician who ritually married each of her younger brothers in turn, and then contrived their assassinations with considerably less ceremony to secure her own position as sole ruler of Egypt. Upon hearing that her younger sister Arsinoë had been addressed as "queen" on a visit to the temple of Artemis at Ephesus in Asia Minor, Cleopatra had her killed as well.

By comparison with this virago, the languid odalisque of nineteenth- and twentieth-century fantasy is no more than a puff of smoke from a Flaubertian hookah, just as the hawk-nosed profile and the piercing gaze of the real woman's surviving portraits reduce our cinematic Cleopatras to painted mannequins—which may be one reason that the Elizabeth Taylor–Richard Burton extravaganza of 1963 was such a colossal flop. Cleopatra VII was larger than anyone's fantasy—except, perhaps, that of the skinny, driven Roman youth who finally annexed her kingdom.

The appeal of the real Cleopatra, if we are to believe Plutarch, lay in the partnership of her mind, her manner, and her mellifluous voice, though Guy Weill Goudchaux's witty essay "Was Cleopatra Beautiful?" presents a strong case for the queen's physiognomy by drawing on Agnolo Bronzino's stunning portrait of the hatchet-faced sixteenth-century Florentine poetess Laura Battiferri. As Goudchaux notes: "Many know the remark of Pascal, who also had quite a prominent nose: 'If Cleopatra's nose were shorter, the shape of the world would have been different.' ... One has to understand Pascal's warning; that if the queen's nose had been shorter, the queen would have lacked the necessary strength of character—of which this powerful nose was the symbol—to attract and keep in her power two of the most influential men of her time."

Her character allowed her to control not only two men, but also an entire country. With six million inhabitants, Egypt in Cleopatra's lifetime was the most populous nation in the Mediterranean world. Called upon to hold her realm steady as Rome, the region's great power, suffered the final convulsions of a century-long civil war, she initially faced as precarious a claim to her throne as Elizabeth I of England, and used the same kind of ferocious intelligence to keep it. Her skill in language won over her own diverse subjects as well as the foreign potentates whom she tried to bend to her interests. A succession of laws introduced in Rome by Julius Caesar during their stay there in 46–44 B.C.E. shows how effectively she was able to protect Egyptian sovereignty abroad (although Caesar's attempts to pass laws allowing him to rule as king outside Italy, to marry a second wife, and to set up a second capital outside Rome reveal that he had his own plans for Egypt). A document on papyrus authorizing tax breaks to Marc Antony's general Publius Canidius still bears the queen's autograph: *ginesthoi*, "let it happen."



COURTESY PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS

Portrait of a woman, first century A.D., found at Herculaneum

At home, the continuation of Cleopatra's cult long after her death reveals her Egyptian subjects' enduring faith in her divine efficacy. Her capital, Alexandria, regarded itself as the most sophisticated city in the world, with its peerless library, its gleaming lighthouse (one of the Seven Wonders of the World), its sages steeped in the wisdom of Egypt, Israel, Persia, Babylon, and Greece, its artists, mathematicians, engineers, and writers dazzled by the intersection of cultures ancient and new. As John Ray writes, "Alexandrians wrote Euclid and Ptolemy's *Almagest*, peopled the first museum, transformed astronomy and the calendar, discovered how the monsoons worked and how to trade with India and the Far East. They dissected corpses, and set up a form of universal health service ... there has never been a more fascinating city."

If Cleopatra VII used her own personality more like Elizabeth I than Elizabeth II, she seems to have had the latter Elizabeth's sovereign sense of duty—as well as her fertility. With a dispatch usually associated with the gods, Cleopatra bore Caesar a son called Caesarion—"little Caesar"—in 47 B.C.E., the year after they met (she was twenty-one, he fifty-two). With Antony, seven years later, she gave birth to a set of twins with the cosmically portentous names of Cleopatra Selene ("Moon") and Alexander Helios ("Sun"), though she continued to groom Caesarion as her successor. Needless to say, Octavian made short work of Caesarion. Cleopatra would have understood why.

Along with a remarkable willingness to dispose of their nearest kin, the queens of earlier times exhibited a distinctly sexual magnetism as an integral component of their majesty. King Solomon's visit to the queen of Sheba begat the kings of Ethiopia; and Aeneas, the Trojan hero, delayed his mission to found Rome once he clapped eyes on Dido, queen of Carthage, dazzled by what Virgil called this *dux femina facti*, this "woman commander of deeds." As late as 1655, when Queen Christina of Sweden and her papal escort Cardinal Decio Azzolini let diplomacy turn to love amid the wonders of Baroque Rome, state visits by queens might be expected to take as intimate a turn as those of their male counterparts. The shiver of flirtation that allegedly accompanied the meetings of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher may be a chaste reminder of less inhibited times, when divine right permitted a more extensive range of royal behavior.

The essence of Cleopatra's charm may have been intangible and her power

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evanescent, but the set of sculpted portraits that inspired the "Cleopatra of Egypt" exhibit in the first place survive to make a haunting assemblage of their own, showing Cleopatra herself, her dynasty, and her contemporaries in all their variety. In these anonymous works, some of surpassing quality, Egyptian, Greek, Etruscan, and Roman artistic traditions meet through a range of media to create amazing cosmopolitan syntheses. The hard sheen and the high polish of green Egyptian basanite are used to render a balding Julius Caesar in the "veristic" style that the Etruscans bequeathed to Rome, with his sparse wisps of hair and all the wrinkles of middle age, clad in the carefully arranged toga of a Roman senator, his inlaid eyes providing a suggestion of their famously riveting gaze. An Alexandrian statue of a ruggedly handsome man with gaunt features like Caesar's exploits the translucent glow of large-grained marble from the distant Greek island of Thasos, combining Roman attention to the texture of aging skin with the abstract elegance of Egyptian-style almond eyes and chiseled cheekbones. A sleek Antony, in basalt such a deep green that it is nearly black, presents that hearty soldier with the elongated neck and composed expression of an austere philosopher, handsome enough to play Shakespeare's hero. Another born warrior, Octavian's brilliant admiral Marcus Agrippa, carved in fine-grained Carrara marble, holds up his large scowling head with the dignity of a Roman patrician, acutely aware, as a self-made man, that an ancient Roman was judged as much for the dignity of his step and the drape of his toga as he was for his achievements.

CLEOPATRA HERSELF APPEARS in all the guises that enabled her to maintain her dominion over her complicated realm. For her Egyptian subjects, she is shown with the dainty, idealized features and the supple figure of a native goddess, carved in painstakingly polished pink Aswan granite. For the sophisticated tastes of Hellenistic Alexandria, the living Isis appears instead as a Greek divinity hewn from Italian marble, with forthright attention drawn to her intelligent eyes and to the nose to which Pascal assigned so portentous a role in the course of history. (Another version, in marble from the Greek island of Paros, has had its nose smashed off.)

We can also see the woman who succeeded where Cleopatra failed, at earning the love of Octavian: the Roman matron Livia Drusilla, whose broad brow, fine bones, and tiny mouth bear an uncanny resemblance to the features of Octavian himself. They were kindred souls in every sense: in their physical appearance, their longevity, and above all in their intimacy with power. Livia looked so much like Octavian's sister Octavia, the wife whom Antony abandoned to follow Cleopatra down the Nile, that portraits of Livia and Octavia, whether on cameos or in the round, cannot always be distinguished from one another by modern scholars.

Like his mother, the ill-fated Caesarion appears in thoroughly Egyptian style, striding forth stiffly in pink Aswan granite, a corona of Greek-boy curls and cupid's-bow mouth tucked incongruously under an Egyptian pharaoh's *nemes* headdress. The sheer hopelessness of this young man's prematurely sealed fate inspired the great Alexandrian poet Cavafy to write of him in 1918:

> In history only a few
> Lines can be found about you
> And hence I could shape you more
> freely in my own mind.
> I made you beautiful and sensitive.
> My art lends your face
> A dreamlike sympathetic beauty.
> And I imagined you so fully
> That late last night, as my light
> Went out—I had just turned it off—
> Suddenly you came into my room;
> You appeared and stood before me,
> the way you were
> In conquered Alexandria
> Pale and tired, pensive in your pain
> Still hoping that the wretches would
> take pity on you—
> The ones who whispered "Too many
> Caesars."

The final section of the show, dedicated to Cleopatra's legacy, was changed in each of its venues, to take advantage of local traditions and locally available works of art. The British Museum mostly displayed paintings and decorative art from London galleries, featuring many an asp pressed to a snowy breast (though Plutarch explicitly notes that Cleopatra applied the fatal snake to her arm); a particularly lurid fifteenth-century manuscript illumination shows the queen applying one hose-like snake to each breast as a shaggy-bearded Antony impales himself.

The most venerable statue of Cleopatra, at least in terms of influence on generations of artists, was discovered in Rome: a larger than life-size full-length reclining marble image unearthed in 1512 and added immediately to the Vatican collections by Pope Julius II. Only in modern times was this famous work identified instead as a mythological figure, the sleeping Cretan princess Ariadne; the snake coiled around her upper arm is obviously a bracelet, not a deadly asp. Rather than move this massive statue from its long-time setting in the Vatican Museums, the Fondazione Memmo instead displayed smaller remnants from the great Roman temple of Isis in the Campus Martius (near today's Piazza Venezia), some recognizably Egyptian, some decidedly executed under Roman influence and according to Roman taste.

A later dweller on the same plot of consecrated ground would become Baroque Rome's foremost Egyptologist: the German Jesuit Athanasius Kircher, who taught mathematics at the Jesuits' Roman College and claimed more than a century before the discovery of the Rosetta Stone to have translated Egyptian hieroglyphs. Carla Alfano's essay "Egypt in Rome" traces a fascination with Egyptian culture that began, at the latest, in the generation of Julius Caesar and has never flagged since. Indeed, from 1512, when Ottoman troops conquered Cairo, until Napoleon's victories in 1799, many European travelers took their idea of Egypt from what they could see of Egyptian monuments in Rome rather than risk Islamic hostility along the Nile itself.

IT IS A pity that the third venue for this important event, the Field Museum in Chicago, failed to capitalize on a noble and uniquely American chapter in Cleopatra's history: her incarnation at the hands of nineteenth-century abolitionist sculptors as a specifically African queen. It was the expatriate American sculptor, poet, and writer William Wetmore Story who first portrayed a *Dying Cleopatra* (now in the Los Angeles County Museum) with distinctly African features in 1858, at the time when his Stateside compatriots were arguing about emancipating their slaves. Henry James's *W.W. Story and His Friends* describes how the American sculptor found many kinds of freedom in Rome, all the while suggesting gently that Story's epic surroundings ultimately dwarfed him. Artistically, perhaps they did. Morally, however, Story and his abolitionist cohorts surely can stand among the despots and the sycophants who commissioned glorious art at least as often, and as successfully, as heroes.

Story was one of the abolitionists who enabled the remarkable American sculptor Edmonia Lewis to come to Rome in 1865, the city where she probably spent the rest of her life. (She is last reported as living there in 1911, before she disappears from the record.) Eleven years after moving to Europe, she hewed her *Dead Cleopatra* from a chunk of Carrara marble for the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition in 1876. Lewis was the only expatriate American "lady sculptress" among the many in the city who resolutely carved her own stone. (Harriet Hosmer and the rest turned their designs over to Italian stone-

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cutters.) With her mix of Native American and African American descent, Lewis was an exotic in Rome; and yet she seems to have enjoyed a far greater freedom there than in her native land, where her white roommates at Oberlin College had accused her of trying to poison them. Henry James had little more to say of her than that she was "a Negress."

Lewis's *Dead Cleopatra*, shocking in its day for portraying the queen as a corpse, had a picturesque career of its own before it came to the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of American Art in Washington in 1996. Surely this impressive work, with its rich history, would have been worth more to the Chicago public than Elizabeth Taylor's gown from the 1963 movie. When will American museums realize that they are not catering to cretins?

At present, alas, for Story and Lewis alike, the tale of their involvement with Cleopatra the African queen still remains to be written, as does the curious connection of this figure with a crucial moment in the history of the United States, a good century before the Afrocentric movement, and the no less curious connection of these abolitionists with the Rome of the popes and of the Italian Republic. Mary Hamer's catalogue essay has gotten the import of Story's statue all wrong by casting it unthinkingly (and most unfairly) in a trite Orientalist mold. Cleopatra herself, of course, connects a whole series of despotic colonial regimes from every point of the compass over a long sweep of human history, from Ramses the Great through Alexander of Macedon, Imperial Rome, Ottoman Turkey, Napoleonic France, and Victorian Britain. And so this remarkable, and none too friendly, queen demands and deserves a historical vision as broadly sophisticated, as subtle, as her Alexandria had been. Rather than making her into a fatuous odalisque, American abolitionist sculptors paid insightful homage to Cleopatra's tragic majesty, a majesty to which this exhibition and this book otherwise do compelling justice. ■

Love and Dissonance

By CHARLES LARMORE

The Tristan Chord: Wagner and Philosophy by Bryan Magee

(Henry Holt and Company, 397 pp., $35)

"HOW CAN I thank him enough?" To his dying day, Wagner never ceased to rehearse the immense debt that he owed to Schopenhauer's philosophy. At a crucial moment in his development as a composer, and at a time when his intellectual bearings were in disarray, Wagner found in Schopenhauer's great work *The World as Will and Representation* a conception of life and art that showed him where his true inspiration lay. No other composer of similar stature developed so deep an interest in philosophy or regarded philosophical ideas as so essential to his music. "Schopenhauer has come into my solitude like a gift from heaven," Wagner exclaimed in a letter to Liszt in 1854. It was a discovery, he later declared, that "gave me the idea for a *Tristan and Isolde*." If reading Schopenhauer proved to be a turning point in his career, the reason was that philosophy had long formed an integral part of the artistic mission upon which Wagner saw himself as having embarked.

Bryan Magee has written a spirited and insightful exploration of the interplay between philosophy and music in Wagnerian opera. One could not ask for a more reliable guide. Among Magee's many other works are a delightful essay titled "Aspects of Wagner" as well as the best study of Schopenhauer's philosophy published in English in recent years. He has a fine grasp of the ways of philosophy and a keen ear for the power of music; and thus he succeeds as few before him in making sense of Wagner as a whole. Bringing together all the different sides of this manifold genius, Magee gives us a deeper appreciation of that synthesis of music and drama, emotion and thought, that Wagner envisioned as the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or "total work of art."

In his long and expansive autobiography—only its title, *My Life*, was concise—Wagner confided that he had "always felt an inclination to try to fathom the depths of philosophy." Magee has chosen this statement for the epigraph to his book. Yet Wagner did not make this remark as he was going over once again his debt to Schopenhauer. It occurs in a passage devoted to an earlier period of his life, the 1840s, when the object of his philosophical enthusiasm was Hegelianism. In fact, Wagner had not yet heard of Schopenhauer when he wrote his most ambitious libretto, *The Ring of the Nibelung*, and published it separately as a book in 1853 before composing the music. Wagner began in the Hegelian camp, and thus was obliged to traverse in his own person the immense distance from Hegel to Schopenhauer. The transformation was profound, and not only in its impact on the composer's intellectual outlook. As Magee shows, it also shifted his music into a new direction.

Hegel and Schopenhauer: two more dissimilar intellectual heroes are hard to imagine. Hegel was the philosopher of reconciliation, keen to explain the inner logic of history and confident that we can learn to feel at home in the world. "We must recognize reason as the rose in the cross of the present," he declared, "and therefore enjoy the present," though generally he spun out this conviction in a cheerless prose, clogged with abstractions and difficult to parse. Schopenhauer, by contrast, regarded the world's sufferings as devoid of purpose and all our endeavors as condemned to defeat. He was the philosopher of detachment, for whom wisdom consists in renunciation, in standing back from the futility of life. "Nothing can be the aim of our existence," he observed, "but the knowledge that it would be better for us not to exist." Always a clear and elegant writer, Schopenhauer had only contempt for Hegel's style as well as for his message. "Windbag and charlatan" and "intellectual Caliban" were among the epithets that he conferred on the arch-obfuscator whom he despised.

BORN IN 1813, Wagner decided while still in his teens that he wanted to be an opera composer. He began by producing a number of derivative works in which he tried his hand at each of the national models of Romantic opera: German (Weber), French (Meyerbeer), and Italian (Bellini). Deciding that the typically German reliance on supernatural events and rich orchestration held the most promise, he went on in the 1840s to compose the first three of the operas that secured his fame, *The Flying Dutchman*, *Tannhäuser*, and *Lohengrin*.

CHARLES LARMORE's most recent book is *The Romantic Legacy* (Columbia University Press).

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Wagner, it is clear, pursued his chosen career in a very deliberate fashion. In fact, his self-assurance knew few limits, and during this early period he also put together a comprehensive account of art and society. He did not merely read and think; he wrote voluminously—poems, short stories, reviews, articles, pamphlets. Later he would write books as well. The standard edition of his collected writings totals sixteen volumes.

The view of the world that Wagner constructed in the 1840s drew upon the most advanced thought of the age. One influence was the group of writers known as Young Germany (the most famous was Heine), who assailed the hidebound authoritarianism of their elders and clamored for liberation, not just political but sexual, too. Tannhäuser's insatiable lust and Siegmund and Siegelinde's incestuous passion are just two examples of Wagner's lifelong obsession with the unbridled demands of free love.

Like many others, Wagner combined the spirit of this movement with an appetite for the latest socialist doctrines from France, and particularly for those of an anarchist cast. He read Proudhon closely and imbibed his teachings: property is nothing but theft once it exceeds an individual's true needs, and at a certain stage of social development (now within sight) all institutions based on force, including the state, will disappear and be replaced by voluntary cooperation. He also absorbed anarchist views firsthand from the most famous agitator of the age, Mikhail Bakunin, his close friend in Dresden, where Wagner had become *Kapellmeister* at the beginning of the decade. The two of them fought together at the barricades in the Dresden uprising of 1849. Like the other insurrections then spreading across Europe, this one, too, was suppressed. Bakunin was arrested, and Wagner fled to Switzerland, living in exile for the next twelve years.

The third component in Wagner's worldview was the thought of Ludwig Feuerbach. After Hegel's death in 1831, there had arisen a generation of radical thinkers, the "left Hegelians," who sought to bring his philosophy down to earth. Feuerbach was the most influential among them. Where Hegel invoked the Concept and the Absolute as though they were actors in their own right, Feuerbach put man back at the center of things. Religion, he argued in *The Essence of Christianity* (1841) and *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future* (1843), is only a vehicle of human longing, and God is but the image of all the perfections of which man dreams for himself. In worshipping God, we are really worshipping ourselves at a remove. So, too, in Feuerbach's account, Hegel's talk of Reason and its "march through history" is a roundabout way of saying that man makes his own history and makes it as the part of nature he is, driven by his needs and feelings. The key thing to preserve from Hegel, Feuerbach claimed, is "faith in the historical future." We must reclaim as our own the capacities that we have attributed to the imaginary "higher beings" of religion and philosophy and build a truly human world based on our most primary desire, which is love.

This theory of mankind's liberation through love had an enormous influence on the young Wagner. In order to "fathom the depths of philosophy," he went back to Hegel himself, as his autobiography reports, and tackled the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*. And when exile drove him from Dresden, forcing him to take stock of his career and plan his next step after *Lohengrin*, he continued to draw on Feuerbach's ideas. Wagner published a series of manifestos calling for a new kind of opera to rival the grandeur of ancient Greek tragedy. One of them, *The Work of Art of the Future*, bore a Feuerbachian title and was dedicated to Feuerbach himself.

OPERA, WAGNER ARGUED, should bring us face-to-face with the truths of human existence. The music should be in the service of drama instead of an end in itself, as it had become in the opera of the day, which offered little more than a medley of arias with vapid lyrics, strung together with a silly story. The music, the libretto, and the action should work together to produce a single dramatic effect. The orchestra could then function like a Greek chorus, setting the scene and commenting on the action, especially through the recurrent use of short themes or "leitmotivs," by which particular characters or emotions would be evoked. "Music drama," so conceived, would have a central place in the coming revolution, galvanizing the public into an understanding of their situation and possibilities.

But Wagner did not simply theorize. In the early 1850s he completed the libretto for a gigantic opera that would put his program into practice. This dramatic poem in four parts (which became four operas) was *The Ring of the Nibelung*, and into it he poured his Feuerbachian philosophy. Significantly, Wagner composed almost no music during this period, that is, for nearly six years after the completion of *Lohengrin* in 1848. It was a time when ideas held all his attention.

The *Ring*'s story begins with Alberich, a dwarf or *Nibelung*, in hot pursuit of the four Rhine-daughters, who manage to elude his attempts at rape. Learning that whoever forswears love and turns the gold buried in the Rhine into a ring will have the means to control the world, Alberich seizes the gold. His ring is a threat to Wotan, the king of the gods, who steals it, though he must then give it to the giants who have built his fortress Valhalla for him. Wotan claims to rule through consent, yet the corruptions of power have already set in; worrying about the fate of the ring, he resorts more and more to the use of force. Eventually the hero Siegfried comes into possession of the ring by virtue of his love for Brünnhilde, Wotan's daughter, who has been stripped of her divinity for disobedience. Though Siegfried dies and Brünnhilde joins him on his funeral pyre, their human love spells the downfall of Wotan's reign, and at the end Valhalla itself is engulfed in flames.

WAGNER'S AIM WAS to translate his vision of history into the elemental language of myth. The plot of the *Ring* shows us man coming into his own, overthrowing the tutelage of the gods and recognizing that his true desire is not for power and wealth but for love. Yet these Feuerbachian notions are not developed very persuasively. Wotan and company hardly represent the higher reaches of religious thought. They philander and they steal, they break oaths and they murder. "They're just a lot of gangsters," Isaiah Berlin once complained. Magee replies, correctly enough, that Wagner's gods were meant to express a primitive stage in man's intellectual development; but for that very reason the poem contains no real insight into the nature of religion.

Nor does the *Ring* offer much of a glimpse into a human future transfigured by love. Siegfried and Brünnhilde conveniently perish at the end of the poem, and thus little is learned about the character of the new epoch that they supposedly inaugurate. Had the two of them survived, would they have settled down and raised a family? Brünnhilde may exclaim in the final lines that she will "live in his arms,/ thus yoked to him ever/in mightiest love!" But she says this just as she is about to hurl herself into the fire with Siegfried and die. Their love is a doomed passion, not a model for the rebirth of mankind; and Wagner himself seems far more interested in the final conflagration than in any new age that will arise from the ashes. Indeed, his revolutionary ardor at the time was kindled chiefly by dreams of fiery destruction. In 1850 he wrote, "I no longer believe in any other revolution than that which begins with the burning down of Paris."

As Magee observes, one of Wagner's enduring convictions was that "we do not belong in this world at all." It seemed to him an alien and hostile place, not least because of the grinding poverty that he

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knew through most of his life, until Ludwig II of Bavaria (the famous "mad Ludwig") became his patron in 1864 and built him an opera house in Bayreuth. Wagner remained a political revolutionary so long as he was able to imagine that this world might somehow be replaced by another. Soon into his exile, however, that hope began to fade. The crucial event was Louis Napoléon's coup d'état of December 1851, which put an end to the Second Republic and extinguished the chances of revolution in France or elsewhere. Wagner said that he would henceforth date all his letters "2 December 1851," since no day thereafter could ever have any significance. The future was dead, and Wagner fell into depression.

IT WAS IN this nadir of despair, in 1854, that he became acquainted with Schopenhauer's writings. That was the year, in fact, when Germany as a whole first took any real notice of them. Though *The World as Will and Representation* had appeared in 1819 and a second edition with an additional volume was published in 1844, Schopenhauer had become a virtually unknown figure. He lived in obscurity in Frankfurt, having given up all thought of an academic career after vainly challenging Hegel's dominance in the early 1820s by scheduling his lectures at the University of Berlin for the same hour as the master's. (Nobody attended.)

But Schopenhauer's fortunes changed dramatically in 1853, when the *Westminster Review* in England published an account of his philosophy. George Eliot, who was then the assistant editor, was herself completing a translation of Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity*, but the article, written by John Oxenford, took a different tack, championing Schopenhauer as the much-needed antidote to the Hegelian doctrines so widespread in Germany over the previous quarter-century. The piece was snapped up by a German journal, and Schopenhauer quickly became all the rage on the Continent. It is a nice irony that at the same time as she was introducing Feuerbach to England, Eliot played a key role, though unwittingly, in re-introducing his opposite to Germany. (Only once did Schopenhauer himself ever refer to Feuerbach, and it was with a curt dismissal: "An Hegelian, enough said.")

The immediate reasons for Schopenhauer's new popularity are not difficult to discern. With the defeat of the revolution of 1848, Hegel's triumphalist view of history as the unfolding of Reason seemed decisively refuted. The world appeared locked in a perpetual seesaw between hope and disillusion. Dreams of a new society based on love and free association, in which man would achieve his true humanity, could only end in disappointment. In this atmosphere, Schopenhauer's bleak diagnosis of the human prospect looked as if it had all the facts on its side. Life was indeed a pointless pageant. History was not the engine of progress, and Schopenhauer had been right all along when he dismissed Hegel's optimism with the assertion that "when one has read Herodotus, one has studied enough history from a philosophical point of view."

The world as we can come to know it, Schopenhauer argued, is the world conceived in accord with the necessary forms of the human understanding. It was in this way that he regarded himself as Kant's disciple. We order our experience not only in terms of space and time, but also in terms of the "principle of sufficient reason": that is, we suppose that everything is as it is because of some reason why it is so and not otherwise. If we were solely rational beings, however, we would not wonder why there was a world at all to represent in this way; we would simply go on plotting how one thing in it depends on another. According to Schopenhauer, it is the sorrow and the suffering of life that push us to ask why the world itself exists (since we may well wish that it did not exist). Straining then to peer beyond the limits of our experience, we also begin to ask what the world is like "in itself," independent of how we are geared to make sense of it. Misery turns man into the *animal metaphysicum*.

Figuring out what lies behind the "world as representation" would be an impossible task were it not, Schopenhauer claimed, that experience itself provides a clue. My body is one object among others, and I can determine its place in the causal order of things as I can determine that of any other object, according to the principle of sufficient reason. Yet my body is also unique in a way that eludes inclusion in any such representation of the world: it is *my own* body. Even if I know everything there is to know about what Charles Larmore has thought and done, there remains the extra fact that Charles Larmore is me. I know my own body from the inside, as I know no other, and what this special knowledge consists in is the awareness of my body as the point where I act in the world. Thus, our own experience points toward a solution to the riddle of existence. If anything has a claim to being the inner nature of reality, the essence of the world as it is "in itself," it is will—and not simply our own will or human will in general, but the primordial energy underlying all existence.

Of course, he added, experience also provides more than enough evidence of the will's futility. Forever striving, always

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disappointed or dissatisfied, the will blindly drives the world along, unendingly. The only way to avoid the illusions of existence lies in renunciation, which means freeing the mind from its subservience to the will. Art is one escape, since it consists in a disinterested contemplation of the forms of things. Morality is another, which Schopenhauer understood as a selfless compassion for the world's sufferings. Finally there is ascetic self-denial, as described in Hindu and Buddhist scriptures, which Schopenhauer was among the first in the West to admire. In all these ways, though to different degrees, the will succeeds in abolishing itself.

IT WAS WAGNER'S friend Georg Herwegh, a fellow exile and poet, who brought Schopenhauer's writings to the composer's attention in 1854, just as he was finishing the musical score for *The Rhinegold*, the first part of the *Ring*. Wagner's first reaction on reading *The World as Will and Representation* was mixed. The importance that it attached to art and in particular to music easily won his approval. But he was put off by Schopenhauer's praise of renunciation, his insistence on extinguishing the will and transcending the absurdity of existence. How could this ethic of self-abnegation be squared with the ideal of the "free individual," which had inspired his revolutionary passion for so many years? Herwegh remarked that every great poet and every great man recognizes intuitively the nothingness of the world. Wagner took the hint. He looked at the *Ring* libretto again and realized, according to his autobiography, that "the very things I now found so unpalatable in the theory were already long familiar to me in my own poetic conception."

Beneath its surface talk about rebirth through love, the poem really portrayed the world's ways as being without hope or value. The love that consumes Brünnhilde and Siegfried cannot but lead, as in fact it does, to fiery death. "Only now," wrote Wagner, "did I understand my own Wotan myself." Indeed, Wotan—not the naïve Siegfried—stood revealed as the true hero of the poem. Having tried to shape the world after his own designs, he comes to acknowledge without illusion the inevitability of defeat. Wotan proclaims the true spirit of the poem when he says (having had to decree the death of his son Siegmund):

> Let what I have built
> fall apart.
> I renounce my work.
> There is only one thing I still wait for:
> the end—
> the end!

The *Ring* now appeared to Wagner as having been all along, if unconsciously, a Schopenhauerian work rather than a Feuerbachian one. The shift in view was profound. It involved nothing less than the antithesis between Hegel and Schopenhauer. As a matter of fact, Wagner began to see in all his previous operas a Schopenhauerian sensibility secretly at work. The Flying Dutchman blurts out the truth of things when he exclaims: "Worlds, end your course! Eternal nothingness, absorb me!" Tannhäuser and Lohengrin, too, are heroes who repudiate life. In *The World as Will and Representation*, Wagner felt that he had found the hidden source of his inspiration. He was himself a creature of boundless will, and the ultimate object of his longing, he realized, was release. He promptly sent Schopenhauer a copy of the published libretto of the *Ring*, inscribed "With reverence and gratitude."

WAGNER ALSO THOUGHT about making a few changes to the poem. Earlier, before these events, there had been a question of adding to Brünnhilde's parting words a Feuerbachian profession of faith:

> Though the race of gods
> passed away like a breath,
> though I leave behind me
> a world without rulers,
> I now bequeath to that world
> my most sacred wisdom's hoard....
> Blessed in joy and sorrow
> love alone can be.

He had decided against this passage, thinking that it would be superfluous. Now, in the wake of his intellectual conversion, he considered making a very different change. He wrote up a new set of closing lines for Brünnhilde, today often called the "Schopenhauer ending":

> From the realm of desire I depart,
> the realm of illusion I abjure for ever....
> My eyes were opened
> by the profoundest suffering
> of grieving love.
> I saw the world end.

Wagner decided in the end that these extra lines were also unnecessary. Yet this time his reasons for staying with the original were completely different. It was to music alone, he concluded, and not to words, that the task of summing up the opera at the end had to fall. In fact, he had been helped to this conclusion by Schopenhauer's own philosophy of art and by the special status that it assigns to music.

According to Schopenhauer, all art involves a liberation from the will. Painting, sculpture, and literature invite us, in their different ways, to stand back from our dealings with things and view the enduring patterns that shape the world of human concern. It is not that the particular is subsumed under the universal as in science, for scientific laws, geared as they are to the prediction and the control of nature, remain an instrument of the will. In a work of art the principle of sufficient reason is suspended, and we are made to look not at the relations among things, but at the things themselves. We see the universal in the particular. Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, for example, gives us the very epitome of "star-cross'd lovers." Thus art disengages us from the will by virtue of inducing a contemplative stance toward the world. Naturally, we look with regret at the young lovers' fate, but our sorrow arises from a distance. That is the reason why, Schopenhauer observed, it is mixed with that peculiar sort of "aesthetic pleasure" that comes with being freed from the toils of the world, which we would never feel (let us hope) when confronted with a similar episode in real life.

MUSIC, TOO, IN Schopenhauer's aesthetics, delivers us from bondage to the will. But music is non-representational, and so it does not free us in the way that the other arts do, by presenting a distilled image of the things around us. What music allows us to behold in aesthetic detachment is the underlying nature of things, namely, the movement of the will itself. Music, the philosopher wrote, "expresses the inner being, the in-itself, of the world." In a chapter of *The World as Will and Representation* called "The Metaphysics of Music," Schopenhauer explained how the fundamental structures of music mirror the crucial moments of the will. "Just as there are two basic moods of the mind, cheerfulness and sorrow, so music has two basic keys, major and minor." Notes that together produce a sense of tension, as in a dominant seventh chord, reflect resistance to the will; whereas the resolution of a dissonance (say, a return to the tonic) simulates the overcoming of an obstacle and hence the will's satisfaction.

Schopenhauer's thoughts on music, no less than his metaphysics, helped Wagner to see the direction that he had to take. The *Ring*'s final message could be stated only musically, because music alone has the capacity to express directly the will and all its vicissitudes. In fact, this view also implied that his previous conception of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* was seriously flawed. Earlier he had reasoned that all the different elements of opera—score, libretto, and action—ought to possess equal weight, since each of them forms a

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means to an end, which is the dramatic impact of the whole. *The Rhinegold*, completed before his discovery of Schopenhauer, exemplifies this notion. As Magee points out, Wagner in this work "derived his melodic line from the poetic line": musical phrases were shaped to fit the words, with longer notes corresponding to verbal emphases and rests coinciding with pauses in speech.

Now, however, Wagner realized that music had to play the predominant role. As he went on to write the score for the three remaining parts of the opera, the orchestration became more massive and the number of crisscrossing leitmotivs increased enormously. Several scenes in *The Twilight of the Gods*, such as Siegfried's Rhine Journey and his Funeral March, are in fact orchestral pieces and lend themselves easily to performance on their own. Wagner felt that he was composing out of his innermost being. He was laying bare the true meaning of a libretto that he had himself misunderstood when he first wrote it down. In the words of Thomas Mann, "Schopenhauer gave Wagner's music the courage to be itself."

Sometimes it is claimed that Nietzsche, too, had a profound influence on Wagner's thinking, particularly when it comes to the idea that music forms the real basis of drama. That theory certainly stands at the heart of Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* (1872); but it is a theory that Nietzsche himself took from Wagner. As Magee shows, the influence was all one way. Nietzsche met Wagner in 1868 and became his disciple, largely owing to their shared adulation of Schopenhauer. Later, of course, he turned against Wagner, and the reasons for his defection were many, among them philosophical disagreement and his own need for independence. (The striking vitriol of Nietzsche's attacks on his former idol had also another source. The "deadly offense" to which he himself once referred elliptically appears to have been—in Magee's new and startling explanation, based on Wagner's correspondence—a letter that Wagner sent to Nietzsche's doctor. Nietzsche's bad eyesight and recurrent headaches, Wagner wrote, were due to excessive masturbation, and he hoped that the doctor would convince him to give it up. The contents of the letter were leaked and became the gossip of Bayreuth society.)

Tristan and Isolde was the first opera that Wagner planned from the outset in a Schopenhauerian spirit. According to Magee, he took his cue from a passage in *The World as Will and Representation* devoted to the harmonic device called "suspension." Sometimes when we expect a discord to be resolved into a consonance, we meet instead a further dissonance, which serves to postpone the final resolution. In this way, Schopenhauer noted, the longing for the end point of the harmonic progression is strengthened in what is "clearly an analogue of the satisfaction of the will which is enhanced through delay." What if an entire opera, Wagner wondered, were constructed as one long, protracted suspension? Would it not be the ideal vehicle for portraying the essential insatiability of the will?

Such was the origin, in Magee's telling, of *Tristan and Isolde*. Actually, the story is much more complicated. The opera's highly chromatic style brought to a head the steady dismantling of the principles of tonality, the increasing ambiguities of key and free exploitation of dissonance, that characterize the music of the first half of the nineteenth century, not least in the works of Wagner's close friend Liszt. *Tristan*'s roots lie in the musical tradition as much as in philosophy. Schopenhauer's influence is certain, but it acted more to crystallize in Wagner's mind the musical developments that he was carrying on from his predecessors.

Even so, the idea of this new opera took him by storm. Wagner interrupted his work on the *Ring* and devoted himself full-time to *Tristan*, completing it in 1859. (The *Ring* was finally completed in 1874.) As in his younger, Feuerbachian days, he still considered love the fundamental human desire. But now he no longer supposed that it formed the basis of a new social order of human brotherhood. Love was instead a pure expression of the will, the unquenchable thirst for total union with the other. The medieval romance of Tristan and Isolde offered the perfect means for endowing this vision with the power of myth.

Wagner set his opera in motion with an initial chord that is a double dissonance, the famous "Tristan chord" that provides the title of Magee's book. The next chord resolves one of the dissonances but not the other, and thus the music unfolds, as Magee explains, by a series of only partial resolutions, with continual shifts in key and chromatic fluidity, to the very close of the work. At no point before the end is absolute consonance achieved. Musically, the tension remains unrelenting, as Tristan and Isolde are swept along by their passion to its ultimate conclusion, which is death.

When the curtain rises, Tristan is bringing Isolde by ship from Ireland to Cornwall to be the bride of the older King Marke. The relations between them are strained because of their undeclared love; death by poison seems the easy way out. But Isolde's confidante gives them a love potion instead, and they hurl themselves into passionate embrace. Act Two shows their furtive lovemaking, as they meet by night to escape the eyes of the court and the king whom they betray. They spin out in a duet a grand opposition between day and night—the realm of order where everything has its proper place and the deeper reality of their love, which cancels all such illusions and swallows up their own individuality. "Lady Love," Isolde cries, "desires the night to come."

This rivalry between day and night is plainly patterned on Schopenhauer's distinction between "the world as representation," in which everything is ordered and explicable, and its metaphysical substratum, "the world as will." In sex (which occurs onstage in scene two), Tristan and Isolde reach deep into the ultimate oneness of things. Schopenhauer himself wrote a "metaphysics of sex" with just such a thesis. "Thus we died, undivided," they sing. Yet the two lovers no sooner find release than their longing begins all over again. Only death itself can give them peace, and in the next act they attain their desire. Tristan dies of wounds from a duel with one of King Marke's knights, and Isolde expires at the sight of his corpse. In the last lines of her so-called *Liebestod* ("lovedeath"), Isolde exults:

> In the surging swell,
> in the ringing sound,
> in the vast wave
> of the world's breath—
> to drown
> to sink
> unconscious—
> supreme joy!

Whereupon the orchestra proceeds to a final, definitive B major chord: to the end of dissonance.

By virtue of its bold departure from the traditional rules of harmony, *Tristan and Isolde* became a central work for the "emancipation of dissonance" and the emergence of atonal music in the twentieth century. For Wagner himself, it was his tribute to Schopenhauer. After completing the *Ring*, he took up another theme from his philosophical mentor. Selfless compassion for the sufferings of life everywhere, Schopenhauer wrote, is the ultimate step to complete renunciation and liberation from the will. This doctrine became the basis of Wagner's next and final opera, *Parsifal*. He finished it in 1882, in his new home outside Bayreuth, which he appropriately named *Wahnfried* ("Peace from Illusion"). He kept a statue of the Buddha in his living room. Though he planned to turn to symphonies after finishing the opera, Wagner's own release came a year later, when he died. ■

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NEW YORK DIARIST

Fashion Show

MY HEART SINKS WHEN I'm asked about "Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art," the show that has just opened at The Jewish Museum. Everybody who comments on this ridiculous event risks being sucked into a p.r.-generated fourth dimension where even the most earth-shattering questions are vaporized, turned to puffs of fatuity. The organizers of this ugly farce would like us to believe they are plumbing the depths of our troubled society when they examine the relationship between current art and culture on the one hand, and the Holocaust on the other. But the "Mirroring Evil" hullabaloo has mostly featured a chorus of self-proclaimed voices-of-reason doing their damndest to obscure both the triviality of the art on display and the understandable objections of some Holocaust survivors.

"MIRRORING EVIL," WHICH WAS ORganized by Norman L. Kleeblatt, a curator at the museum, is one of those sadly familiar events in which artistic opportunism is repackaged as intellectual high-mindedness, and everybody who comes near is in danger of drowning in the quicksand. Michael Kimmelman, the chief art critic of *The New York Times*, made some sensible observations about the bottom-of-the-barrel quality of the stuff on display, but his review also gave significant exposure to Piotr Uklański, whose work *The Nazis*—an anthology of head shots of movie actors such as Yul Brynner playing officers in the Third Reich—dominated the front page of the "Weekend" section. If the point of Uklański's installation is that there is something a bit disturbing about Hollywood's fondness for casting good-looking actors as Nazis, I can't say I entirely disagree. Nearly a decade ago, when I walked out of a movie theater in the middle of *Schindler's List*, it was mostly because I couldn't bear watching moviegoers eating popcorn as the narrative moved inexorably toward the gas chambers. But it was also partly because I was embarrassed that Steven Spielberg had fallen for the oldest cliché in the book when he pitted Schindler, played by that golden hunk Liam Neeson, against Ben Kingsley's withered Jew.

STILL, THE FACT THAT *SCHINDLER'S List* went on to rack up Academy Awards is not, so far as I am concerned, some general indictment of our culture. Yes, some images related to the Nazi period—Aryan good looks, sleek military uniforms—have gotten mixed into popular erotic daydreams, but that does not mean our society has gone to hell. After all, the very decades that have brought us these trashy allusions to the Third Reich have also seen a wave of serious scholarship about the Holocaust; ever-growing support for the financial claims of survivors; and large amounts of money, both public and private, for school programs, museums, and memorials about the Six Million. As for the broader accusation made by "Mirroring Evil," namely that there is some relationship between fashion-conscious consumerism and the ease with which large numbers of people sometimes bow to the will of a murderous leader, the very suggestion strikes me as an obscene caricature of the complexities of human nature.

THE WORD "TRANSGRESSION" HAS been bandied about like some kind of mantra, but in fact "Mirroring Evil" and the attendant controversy have a sanitized, safe-zone aura. If there is something wrong with how pop culture responds to catastrophic events, then the answer lies not in feel-good discussion groups, but in the far more difficult job of trying to affect thinking in the wider world—at the big movie companies, for example. And if arts institutions such as The Jewish Museum are squandering valuable resources on Zbigniew Libera's *LEGO Concentration Camp Set* (a toy Auschwitz, complete with guards bludgeoning inmates) and Tom Sachs's *Prada Deathcamp* (a crude model of blocky buildings surrounded by high fences that is made out of packaging from Prada), this is part of a broader art-world problem—a problem epitomized by the fatuous work of Bruce Nauman, whose nastily prankish *Clown Torture* video has been hailed as a masterpiece.

ALTHOUGH THE JEWISH MUSEUM has surrounded the art on display with a furrowed-brow seriousness, the cat was let out of the bag when Tom Sachs gave a brief interview to the *Times Magazine*, in which he offered such pearls of wisdom as this: "I'm using the iconography of the Holocaust to bring attention to fashion. Fashion, like fascism, is about loss of identity." That a cynical fool like Sachs has a career in the art world is not something you can blame on people's misunderstandings of the Holocaust.

ONE OF "MIRRORING EVIL"'S FUNDAmental assumptions seems to be that art in particular and culture in general not only have an obligation to reflect on the nature of evil but also have the capacity to change our behavior for the better. I wonder if this has often, if indeed ever, been the case. The artists of the Middle Ages and Renaissance—times that were full of unspeakable brutality—created masterworks in which their contemporaries were brought face to face with human suffering, and yet I am not convinced that anybody's actions were altered in any substantial degree. As for the bottom-feeding charlatans involved in the Jewish Museum show, it is comical to imagine that their slight concoctions would inspire people to change their ways.

EVERYTHING ABOUT "MIRRORING Evil" is too easy: The art is too easy to criticize, the issues are too easy an occasion for dialogue. Concurrently with "Mirroring Evil," The Jewish Museum is presenting a small selection of works by Zoran Music, a painter who was in Dachau and has in recent decades earned a reputation in France with a series of canvases, called "We Are Not the Last," in which heaped corpses commemorate the nightmare of the camps. I can't say I find Music's work entirely convincing—the wraithlike lyricism of his technique feels a little arch given the subject matter—but he is a painter who actually struggles to give form to an immensely intransigent subject. If Zoran Music fails, he fails as an artist. I cannot say the same of any of the men and women whose projects are included in "Mirroring Evil."

THE ONLY INTERESTING QUESTION raised by "Mirroring Evil" is why this folly was not avoided. I wish the museum had not put survivors in the ugly bind of knowing that in remaining silent they might be untrue to themselves, while in raising their voices to protest they would help deliver The Jewish Museum and the artists involved precisely this kind of *succès d'estime*. As for the broad spectrum of Jewish intellectual, religious, and cultural leaders who have rushed to defend this creepy event, I wish they would wake up and realize that in this country at this moment the right of artists to carry on however they please is not exactly in need of defense. Transgression has become the national pastime.

JED PERL

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A Repeat Performance:
Sandra Feldman and School Choice Falsehoods

Sandra Feldman, president of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), takes a backseat to no one when it comes to willful misrepresentation about school choice programs.

Last October we documented her false claim — broadcast on National Public Radio — that vouchers for low-income Cleveland parents forced a cut in public school kindergarten programs. Feldman's own research staff explained that they could not back up that statement. In fact, the Cleveland Municipal School District confirmed that kindergarten programs had *expanded* after the start of the school choice program there.

We predicted more inaccurate statements from Feldman. We were correct.

Feldman recently wrote in *USA Today* that "wherever vouchers have been used" students have not made significant academic gains. Feldman further claimed that unnamed "researchers now know that the [voucher] experiment has failed."

The AFT names no "researcher" to support Feldman's claim. However, here are three researchers who take the opposite view.

Tom Loveless, Ph.D., a Senior Fellow in Governmental Studies at The Brookings Institution, directs the Brown Center on Education Policy. In September 2001, Dr. Loveless wrote, "Although controversial, research generally shows positive effects for students using vouchers to attend private schools."

Kim Metcalf, Ph.D., director of the Indiana University Center for Evaluation, is the independent evaluator of Cleveland's school choice program. Dr. Metcalf's most recent report describes the "statistically significant positive impact of the program on students' academic achievement, particularly as they progress beyond the early primary grades."

Parental School Choice is Widespread — Unless You're Poor.

Paul Hill, Ph.D., directs the Center on Reinventing Public Education at the University of Washington. Dr. Hill previously worked for 17 years as a Senior Social Scientist in RAND's Washington, D.C., office. He said, "Rigorously controlled studies of the links between vouchers and student achievement ... are mildly positive in virtually every case ... The weight of evidence is definitely toward positive effects [except for] middle-school boys in the District of Columbia."

Why does the president of the American Federation of Teachers continue a campaign of misinformation about the effort to expand educational options for low-income parents?

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